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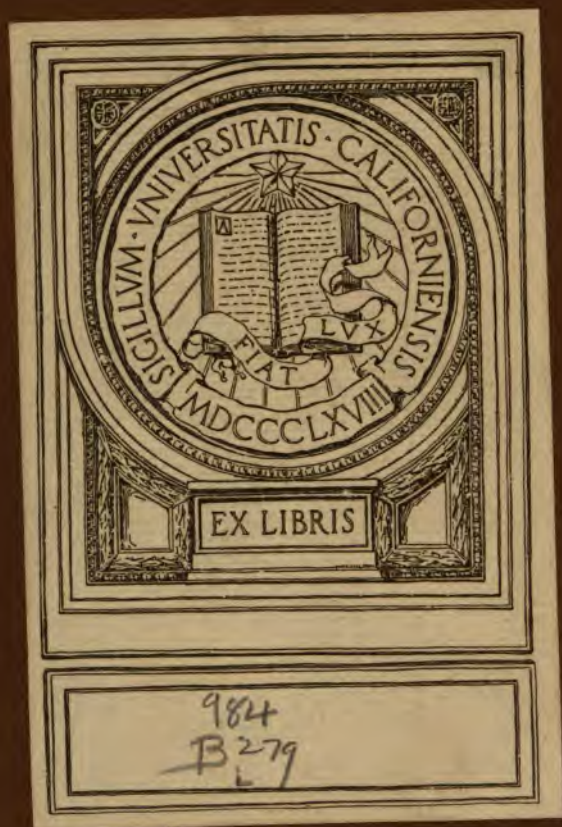
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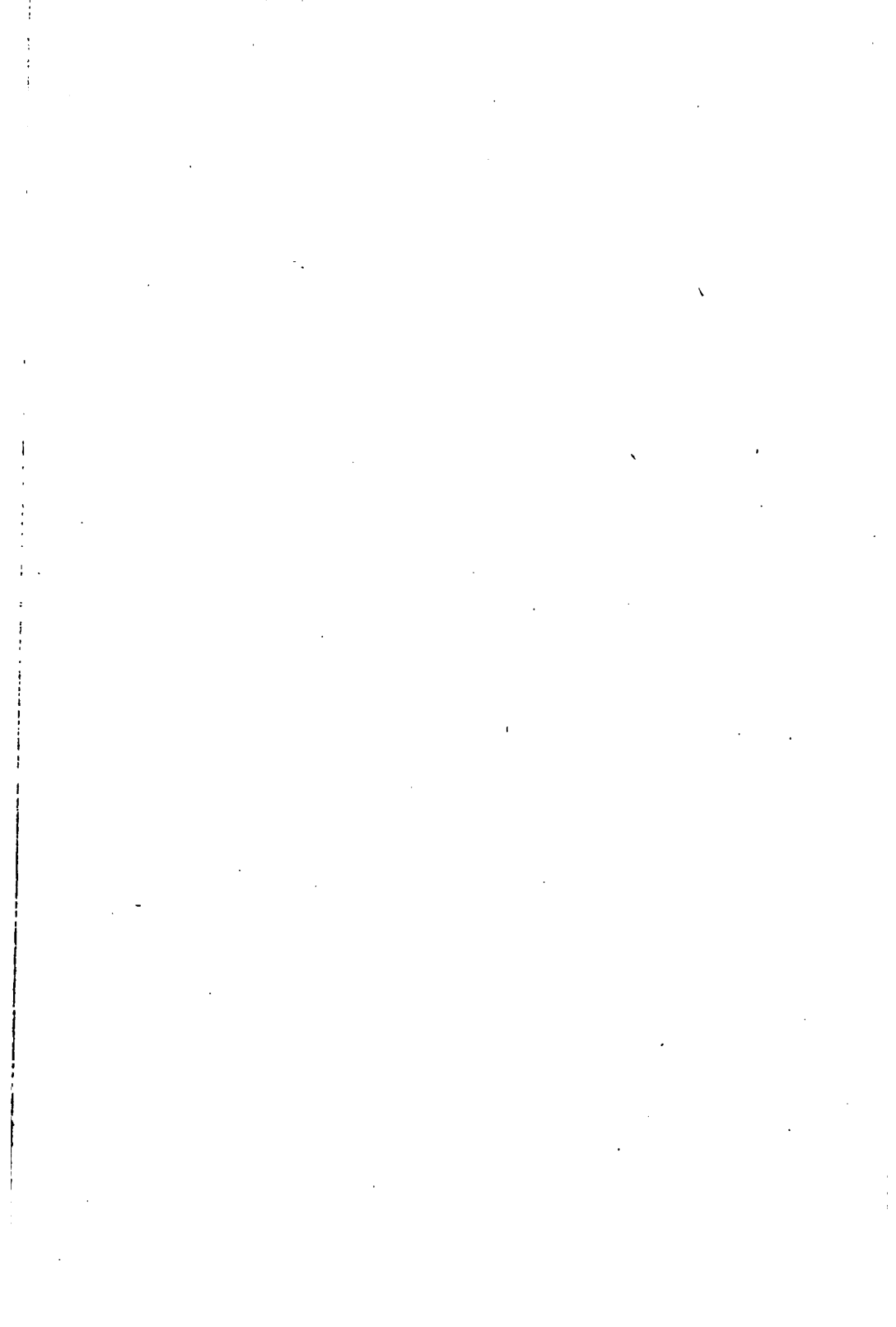


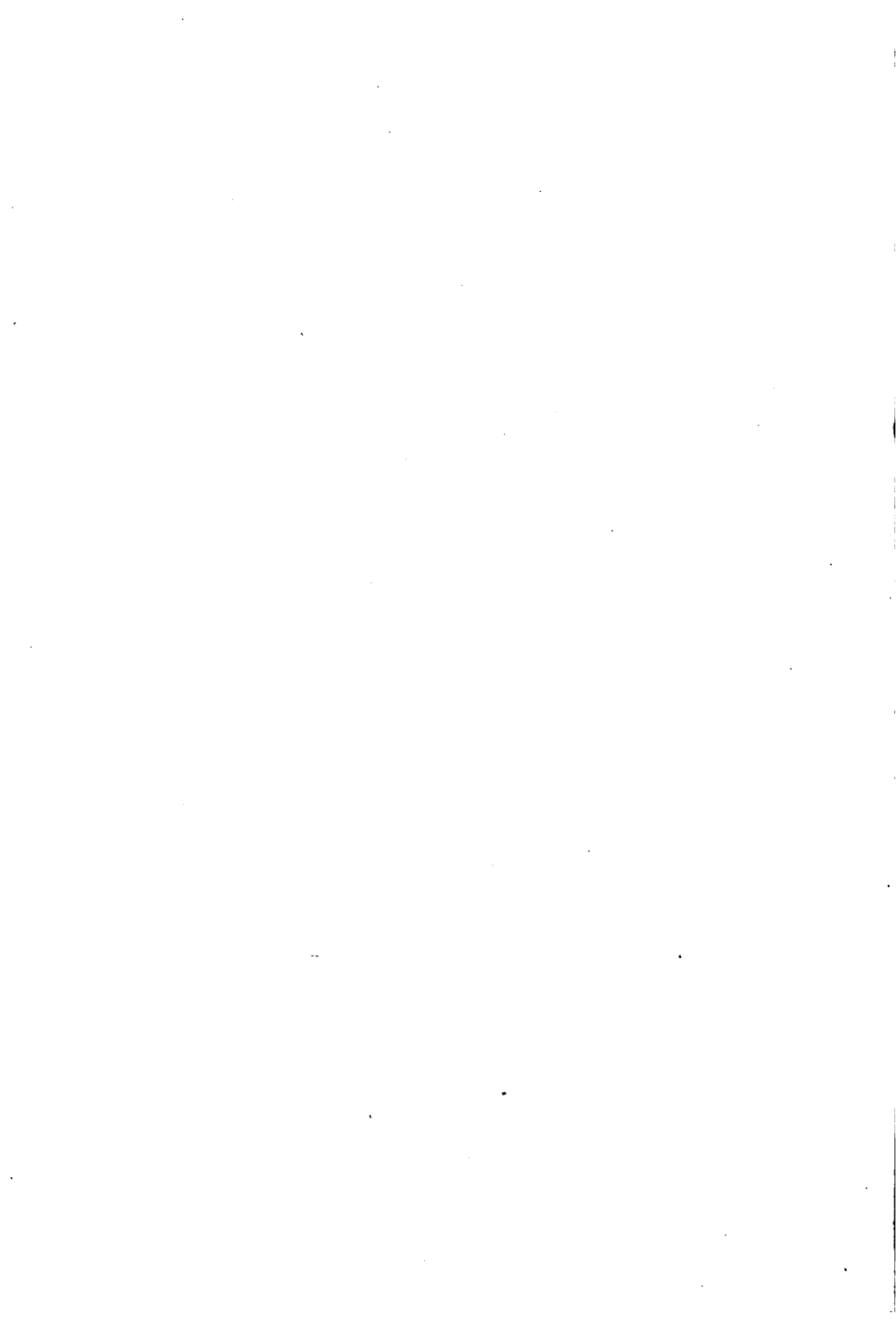
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# INTIMATIONS









# INTIMATIONS

A COLLECTION OF BRIEF  
ESSAYS DEALING MAINLY WITH  
ASPECTS OF EVERYDAY LIVING FROM  
A POINT OF VIEW LESS CONTRO-  
VERSIAL THAN INQUIRING  
AND SUGGESTIVE · BY  
JOHN D. BARRY

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

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*These essays first appeared in the San  
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revised and, to some extent, rearranged.*

THE MIND  
ALBION JACO

PRINTED BY  
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To  
FREMONT OLDER

297281



## PREFACE

*In these essays I have had several reasons for trying to avoid the controversial method. It seems to me least effective for conveying ideas. Instead of opening the doors of the mind, it often leaves them more tightly closed. Most of us, I believe, agree far more than we stop to realize. We have been misled by our habit of looking for differences. We have developed an exaggerated faith in assertion and force. By disputing we waste energy and time, we misunderstand and we misinterpret and, what is worse, we dispel good-will. I have followed what I like to consider a more profitable way, in spite of its being out of fashion.*





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# INTIMATIONS



"TO UNDERSTAND IS TO FORGIVE"

**I**T COMES from the French, this greatest of all proverbs, *Tout comprendre est tout pardonner*. The French idiom very tersely expresses the thought. Literally translated, "To understand all is to forgive all," it does not sound natural. But we have an equivalent even more terse than the original French and just as expressive, "To understand is to forgive."

A WOMAN of my acquaintance lived for many years with a man of irascible temper. His explosions used to be terrifying. At such times he would speak to his wife in ways that would be almost unendurable. But the wife endured. She persisted in enduring even after her relatives tried to force her to leave the man. Finally he became violently and hopelessly insane. Then the physicians discovered that he had been insane for years.

The wife was both glad and sorry, glad because she had not added to his sufferings and failed in what she believed to be her duty by abandoning him, sorry because she had not been able to help.

If he had been properly treated, perhaps put away for a time, he might have been cured. She, too, might have been spared a great deal of anguish. Now, however, she understood. And understanding, it was easy for her to forgive.

YEARS ago I used to know a popular writer of humorous stories. Like many humorists he was subject to profound depression. It made him develop a pessimistic philosophy. He used to make grave charges against nature. "We are put into this world without any volition on our part," he would say, "and for a few years we are allowed to be

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young and to enjoy the pleasures of youth. Then we begin to grow old and we are forced to stay here and see ourselves decay."

Some of his friends used to argue that, if we cared enough, we could turn the passing years to profit and make our lives richer.

But he had no patience with any such theory.

For months at a time he would be unable to work. Occasionally when I would go to see him I would find him sitting motionless, helpless, giving himself up to what he called "the blue devils."

Once I asked him if he didn't take any interest in his work. He made a wry face. "I grind it out word by word," he said, "and every word draws blood!"

But his writing read as if he had dashed it off gaily, spontaneously.

On another occasion I asked him if he didn't get any happiness out of his success. He shrugged his shoulders. "I like the money," he said.

People who loved his stories used to try to meet him. But he kept out of the way. To ask him to meet an admirer was to impose a burden on him.

His case puzzled me. I often wondered how one who was offered so much could have so poor a capacity for enjoying.

He died long before he had time to be overtaken by the decay that he feared.

It was a relief to me to hear that when the doctors performed an autopsy on his body they found several of his vital organs diseased. Now I could understand. It was not life that was wrong. It was he himself.

He simply had not known how to take care of his physical machine.

So his mind, without proper support, suffered and rebelled and inflicted on him the torment of depressing thoughts.

## **"TO UNDERSTAND IS TO FORGIVE"**

So often we think that life is wrong when the wrong lies in ourselves.

IN THE physical life we all know that to understand is to forgive.

It is easy for us to see with our eyes, to understand by means of our senses. So it is easy for us to forgive. Indeed, in cases of obvious physical defects, we go so far as never to speak or to think of forgiving. We find nothing to forgive. We feel with the sufferers. We pity. And where we can we try to help.

When we see people writhing in physical agony or groaning or screaming we don't blame them for disturbing our peace of mind.

If we are selfish, however, we may long to escape from the sight and sound of such suffering.

Most of us have to understand through our senses or we can't understand at all.

It is when we have to understand through the reason and through the imagination that the test comes.

Here we all make lamentable failures.

In most cases the explanation is that we don't try to understand.

Now we know that mysterious forces are at work in life, making people do things that are beyond our comprehension.

The knowledge alone ought to make us slow to judge and to condemn.

Some day, perhaps, we shall grasp the meaning of those forces. Perhaps we shall be able to control them. Then we shall realize the folly of punishing.

THERE is a man of my acquaintance who, during a long career, has occupied a position of great public trust. He has been a prosecutor of evil doers. Mercilessly he has exposed them. Whenever he could, he would drive them



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to the penitentiary. And while he has been doing this work he has been learning things about life. He has been developing. He has now reached the place where he is able to take a wholly new view of his duty and of his relation to society.

As Lincoln Steffens says, he has caught up with himself. He has found that he, too, is an evil doer. And much of the evil he believes has resulted from his exposing and punishing those other evil doers. He longs to make reparation.

For in his work of the past he has detected self-righteousness and the lack of sympathy that self-righteousness always engenders.

In the lack of sympathy he knows there is lack of understanding.

He realizes that to understand is not only to forgive, but to sympathize, to feel with others, to put oneself in the other's place.

WHEN, with real understanding, we put ourselves in the place of another, no matter how dreadful that place may be, we are not slow to forgive, we are eager. We judge others then as we almost invariably judge ourselves.

It is only by a great effort of the imagination that we can escape from ourselves and take the point of another who does things or thinks or says things we are opposed to.

And yet all we have to do is to realize that, in indulging self-justification, others are doing exactly as we do.

Few of us seem capable of doing what the man I have referred to is doing, getting away from ourselves and viewing our actions impersonally.

But what he has done we must all do if we are to know the meaning of life and to live by it.

THERE are so many avenues leading to this every-day

**"TO UNDERSTAND IS TO FORGIVE"**

truth that we show considerable adroitness in losing the way. Our persistence suggests that we don't really care.

For example, the doctors and the scientists are continually warning us about heredity and the influences of environment and the relation between physical health and mental health.

We know that there are people who inherit a tendency to drink. And yet, as members of society, we place temptations in their way. Most of us may be immune for the simple reason that we have not inherited this particular weakness.

Yet when we see the drunkard we help to make, we shrink away or turn aside our faces, and we shake our heads.

We seldom think of helping.

Nearly always we judge.

Perhaps the proverb ought to be changed. Perhaps it should be: "To understand is to forgive every one but ourselves."

IN THE slums of the great cities vice is rampant. When we go slumming we see it expressed through women that we call fallen women and through men that have reached the same depths or greater depths.

We used to blame the women and men far more than we do now.

About these people we are learning.

Among other things we are learning that, with very few exceptions, they are not in the depths because they choose to be there, but because we have helped to drive them there, you and I among the others.

And even toward those we call "naturally depraved" we are changing our attitude.

If they are "naturally depraved," of course they are not to blame. They deserve only pity and help.

Shall we further afflict those already so afflicted?

**"TO UNDERSTAND IS TO FORGIVE"**

**JUST NOW** there are others, very different in appearance and just as blind to truth, in some ways just as depraved.

They live in magnificent houses, they wear beautiful clothes and they go about in automobiles.

It is they who have captured a large part of the bounty of the earth.

They are keeping for themselves far more than they can use, or their children can use, or their children's children.

Their greed is making millions of their fellow creatures suffer.

But they pay no heed. They don't understand.

Some of us are angry about them. But our anger is unjustifiable.

For if we were in their place, if we led lives like theirs, so sheltered from the truth, we should be just like them.

**IF WE** feel patience and pity for the wretches of the slums, let us feel pity and patience for those others.

They are losing the opportunities of life exactly as those others are.

They are not to blame. They haven't waked up yet. They don't understand.

## BOGIES OF EDUCATION

**S**EVERAL men of my acquaintance, men who have achieved success, nourish sadness in their lives. I often hear them refer to it regretfully.

They have been denied a college education.

At first I used to feel like laughing. Now I sympathize. I wish that they might have had a college education.

But my reason is different from theirs.

They wish it, or think that they wish it, because college education would have given them certain advantages and because they think that without these advantages they have suffered a handicap.

I wish it because I know a college education would convince them of the comparative unimportance of a college education.

**T**HERE is another point worth considering here, however. These men are hampered in their consciousness of not having had a college education. They think that it places them on an inferior level, that is, in their relation with college men. And they sometimes show a concern lest college men try to patronize them, as I suspect college men occasionally do.

That feeling is a real handicap. Besides, it must be very unpleasant.

**I** KNOW a writer, a very able man, who often apologizes because he has not received a college education. When he gets into a discussion with friends, college men, most of them utterly inferior to him in ability and in real culture, he likes to make remarks of this kind: "Well, of course, you know I'm not a college man. I haven't the authority that you fellows have. Maybe if I knew as much as you do I should hold a different opinion."

## BOGIES OF EDUCATION

Some of his college friends like his modesty. Others think it is insincere. Still others find it disconcerting.

I suspect he is not wholly frank in his attitude; but way down deep I know that he suffers from the sense of something lost in his life, something that never can be made up.

WHEN William Dean Howells was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he lived in Cambridge. Naturally he was thrown into association with the college people. One day, while walking through the college grounds with James Russell Lowell, he expressed regret that he had not gone to college. Lowell considered the matter very thoughtfully. Then he assured Mr. Howells that he believed the regret was unnecessary. If Mr. Howells had gone to college, he explained, he might have lost his originality, his fresh outlook on life. He might have been made academic, imitative.

I imagine that the conversation gave a great deal of comfort to Mr. Howells.

At any rate, Mr. Howells is an admirable example of the man who, without going to college, may become one of the most highly educated and most broadly cultivated men in the world.

Here is the point: Colleges are not the only avenue to education. With some people they may not be the best avenue.

There are many other avenues.

The best avenue of all is the avenue of life.

And the best that a college education can do for any man is to prepare him to take full advantage of the education provided in the avenue of life.

Some people do not need this preparation. They are often those who lament that they have not gone to college.

ONE MAY positively be harmed by college education. I have known men to be ruined for life by going to col-

## BOGIES OF EDUCATION

lege. And among these men I don't include those boys who fall into vicious habits. I include that most remarkable class of human beings, those who become infected with intellectual pride, whose minds are closed to the education provided by life.

There are many such. One sees them on all sides. Usually they are finely dressed. They look out on life with what seems like a noble self-assurance.

Yes, they look out with apparently clear eyes. But they see nothing.

And what is worse, they imagine that they see things which are wholly false and debasing to themselves.

They live in a world of sham created by their own prejudices.

I ONCE heard a conversation between two thoughtful seniors in a great college. They were talking about what the college had done for them and were asking if they could conscientiously consider themselves educated men.

They frankly decided that they could not consider themselves educated men.

They were clever enough, even at that period, to recognize what all college men of mature years must recognize, that college is the primary school of life.

Those college men who accepted college as what is called in the language of young girls' seminaries, "a finishing school," can never claim to be educated at all.

And yet, I know plenty of college men, well advanced in life, who remain, intellectually speaking, at the very point where they were on the day of graduation.

And I know plenty of other men, who have never seen the inside of a college, and yet are, in the true sense of the word, far better educated than most of the college men in the world.

THE PRESENT reaction against college education is very different from the old prejudice, far more reasonable and

## BOGIES OF EDUCATION

intelligent. It frankly says that college education, instead of being what it claims to be, an efficient means of preparing young people to use their abilities and their characters to best advantage, merely puts into the mind a great deal of useless or misleading or merely decorative knowledge and develops crippling prejudices. So often one hears college graduates urge young men not to waste valuable years in college but to give those years to practical life.

ONE YOUNG woman of my acquaintance, an expert stenographer, after several years of work that sharpened her faculties and developed her intelligence, told a college graduate, a woman, that the ambition of her life was to take a college course. The woman replied: "If I were you I wouldn't do it. You have learned from your work more than any college can teach you. At best all it could give you would be certain technical training. Much of the study would seem to you like child's play."

REMARKS of this kind plainly indicate that there is something the matter with our higher education. By young people themselves it is regarded as chiefly valuable through its association. One often hears them saying that it makes four of the pleasantest years in life and creates friendships and associations that are likely to be of practical advantage. Unless it does much more it can hardly justify itself as an institution. And surely there is no excuse for its sending into the world those bogies of education that develop so many heartburnings and misconceptions.

ALL OF which does not keep me from longing for the time when every one shall have a chance, whether he decide to accept it or no, to get the full preparation for the education of life, when there shall be colleges of real democracy where students shall be taught to think for themselves and to build their lives on generous ideals.

## BOGIES OF EDUCATION

This is more than some of our colleges are doing for students today. In fact, in certain great colleges, democracy is decidedly at a discount. And generous ideals go down before the competitive social spirit which leads to the petty competition of the world.



## RELIGION IN ART

**A** DISTINGUISHED art critic maintains that there can be no art without a great religion. For illustration he points to the achievements of Michael Angelo and Raphael and to many other painters of a time when religion was the chief inspiration of art.

I thought of that critic's philosophy when I looked at the canvases in a superb loan collection, including Millet's "The Man with the Hoe." Some of the most impressive dealt with religious themes. They gave opportunities for splendid effects of color. One, reproducing a church procession, was particularly beautiful and inspiring. After looking at it I went back to "The Man with the Hoe." I felt puzzled. Here was a picture that had no brilliant coloring, no splendor of background. And yet it was the center of interest in this collection, the gem. Moreover, it had been acclaimed by the world as not merely one of the greatest of modern paintings, but one of the greatest masterpieces of all times. Considered from the severely æsthetic point of view, it had no beauty. On the contrary, it was hideous. The man, standing in the foreground, seemed brutish. He leaned against a hoe that reached to his waist as if he felt a natural inclination to bend toward the earth. The rocky ground about him looked pitifully barren. In the face there was little to differentiate the man from the beasts of the field. He had the air of being oblivious to the sweeping beauty of the sky, to the intoxication of the air and sunshine. In his coarse features, with the high cheekbones and the small dull eyes, centuries of toil found dumb expression.

What inspiration could there be in such a picture? Did it have anything that might be said to approximate the spirit of religion?

PERHAPS the best answer would lie in the effect of the picture on the world. It has done more than we can possibly calculate to move the hearts of women and men. It has made us all realize the wide differences in the possibilities of human development. I know that David Starr Jordan is not wholly in sympathy with the interpretation of the picture given by Edwin Markham. "The Man with the Hoe," he thinks, does not stand for the debasement of a human type. He is not bent toward the land, but rising. In either case, we must all agree that he has not risen far. Compare him, for example, with the higher types developed by civilization. He represents a pitiful waste of human material. Where he is now "brother to the ox" he might, under favoring conditions, become like a god.

SUCH, then, is the lesson of "The Man with the Hoe." It makes us perceive that in spite of being "brother to the ox" he is our brother. In the conditions of his life, both present and reaching back into the past, we might be exactly like him. Those beautiful pictures of medieval religious ceremonial charm us with their beauty and cultivate our senses and appeal to us through the spirit of aspiration and of devotion. But is there no cultivation in a painting like "The Man with the Hoe," no appeal to the senses and to the nobler impulses?

IT SEEMS to me that there is. And it is one of the strongest and the highest of appeals. It is the appeal of humanity, of brotherhood, making men long to give to others the opportunities they have enjoyed themselves or even perhaps greater opportunities, to open up to the whole mass of mankind the riches of the world now possessed by the few.

AFTER all, that art critic must have been right. There cannot be a great art without a great religion. But that

great religion need not be associated with ceremonial. It must go, however, back to the spirit that finds in ceremonial only one of many noble expressions.

THE ART exemplified by Millet teaches us that there is a beauty transcending color or design. It reaches down to the significance of human relations.

Once "The Man with the Hoe" could not have been painted by a great artist. It would have had no appeal as a theme. Moreover, the lesson would have been lost. For in all works of art two factors are brought into play, the spirit of the artist and the spirit of those who look at his work.

MILLET was moved by the new democracy, first preached in France with notable effect by Rousseau and leading through the horrors of the French revolution to the dawning of the era that joyously recognized the inalienable rights of man. When "The Man with the Hoe" was given to the world it found the world responsive. It showed how much could be done by one powerful illustration, free from the passion of argument, silent and yet speaking with a multitude of tongues. It also pointed the way to other painters dominated by the modern spirit. But they have been slow to follow. They have not recognized the immense possibilities for artistic expression that lie within the new religion. Perhaps, as yet, they have not felt it deeply enough. Like so many artists, they may have been too far removed from the seething life of toil and anguish that offers the finest inspiration. But the day is coming when there will be many paintings that can be classified with "The Man with the Hoe," when the world will see a great new art founded on the great new religion, which, after all, is the old religion of Christ interpreted in the light of the modern spirit.

## CLEANLINESS

**WE** SPEAK of cleanliness as if it were a moral quality. In itself, however, it is a mere convention.

If each of us were to become a Robinson Crusoe we should find cleanliness much harder to maintain than it is now.

Long established habit would not be enough.

We should have to draw on the resources of character.

THERE is such a thing, of course, as being over-concerned in the matter of cleanliness. Sometimes we hear people referred to contemptuously as being "afraid of dirt" or "afraid to soil their hands." Their love of cleanliness may be a weakness, not, however, in itself, but through association with unworthy qualities.

There are times when it may be discreditable to remain clean. Refusal to soil one's hands or one's clothes may mean refusal to meet a duty or to perform a distasteful service.

Children often ridicule one another for betraying a fear of dirt. In a child such a fear may be a bad sign. It may indicate unattractive and unwholesome precocity, or selfishness, or vanity.

In boys it nearly always betrays effeminacy.

IHAVE often been amused to hear of some of the precautions against uncleanness taken by the rich in traveling. One woman carries with her not only drinking water, but the water she uses in bathing. She carries also a rubber bowl which is made to cover the basin in her stateroom. In this way she believes she avoids contamination.

## CLEANLINESS

This woman forgets that there may be contamination in her very solicitude for herself. And what can she think about the impurities in the air which she must constantly breathe, not only in trains, but in her every-day experiences in the world?

It is possible to think so much about cleanliness as to invite uncleanness.

The mental attitude can turn clean things into unclean.

Here we should bear in mind the belief of that physician who declares there is no such thing as uncleanness and eats sugar drawn from the human body.

The uncleanness in regard to things outside one is largely mental.

MANY of those most solicitous about cleanliness of body will, nevertheless, clog the body with impurities. They will eat unwholesome food. They will develop unsightly debilitating fat.

They may be unaware of their uncleanness, but to the eye of the physician they are diseased.

If people were only half as careful about the cleanliness of their vital organs as they are about the cleanliness of their skins there would be far less sickness in the world, far less mental depression.

In this regard civilization has made very little progress. On the contrary, in many ways, it has gone back. The Jewish people, for example, made internal cleanliness a matter of grave concern, associated with the practice of their religion. At present, those who follow the old dispensation are grieving because, in this regard, as well as in some other ways, their children are ceasing to follow tradition. Great sacrifices they make for the sake of maintaining what they believe to be perfect cleanliness. To the younger generation these sacrifices seem either unnecessary or not worth making.

## CLEANLINESS

On the other hand, within recent years, there are signs of a return to the old-fashioned ideal of complete cleanliness of body. Most of the food cults have among their aims this ideal. It is easy to laugh at them. And in their theories there may be a good deal that is absurd. But they show that they are working toward a deeper cleanliness than most of us even think about.

THERE is, however, a deeper cleanliness still, far more important than any other, related to physical conditions, too, cleanliness of mind.

How many of us strive to maintain this kind of cleanliness?

There are those who believe cleanliness of mind is necessarily associated with cleanliness of body. But the world at large knows better.

Several years ago a distinguished English writer brought ridicule on himself by declaring that a man who was careful about his personal appearance would be careful about his morals.

In "The Kreutzer Sonata" Tolstoy has described those easily recognizable libertines who, at evening parties, appear in faultless clothes and immaculate shirt fronts, fairly shining with cleanliness.

Often the worst violators of the moral law are the most carefully dressed, among both women and men.

IT DOES not necessarily follow, however, that such violators of the moral law are unclean in mind.

Here is a point that we ought never to forget.

Morality is not merely a matter of doing. It is essentially a matter of thinking, of being.

Some of the best behaved people in the world are the most unclean in mind. The offenses that, through fear or lack of opportunity, they never commit, they may shamelessly yield to in dark recesses of consciousness.

## CLEANLINESS

Some of those considered unclean in their lives, through the violation of our conventions and laws, may, in mind, be cleaner than those who judge them most harshly.

CLEANLINESS of mind is one of the most subtle of all things to discuss, the most elusive, the most mysterious. Perhaps absolute cleanliness of mind is impossible. The very people who most love purity, and who strive hardest, not only in deed, but in thought, to keep pure, are often afflicted with shameful thoughts. They, themselves, would be slow to claim that they possessed cleanliness of mind. Yet, is it not possible that in such minds the unclean thoughts are mere reflections, like the reflections in a perfect mirror? They are not unwholesome unless they are welcomed in the mind, entertained, indulged.

Just as physical cleanliness is hygienic, so is cleanliness of mind. It keeps the mind in a condition where it can generate healthy thoughts. And the thoughts find physical expression through health in the body.

Here we can see what Socrates meant when he said that virtue was its own reward. If we can trace virtue from its beginnings, from the cleanliness that it generates in the mind, to its effect on the body, we shall find it flowering into all kinds of beauty and stimulating activity and inspiring social relations.

Love for cleanliness of mind, however, has to be encouraged and developed exactly like love for cleanliness of body. And just as cleanliness of body is related to economic conditions, so is cleanliness of mind. For there are unquestionably those who, driven by the lack of opportunity from the wholesome expression of themselves in the world of activity, resort to unwholesome expression through the imagination. Perhaps only the doctors and

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the priests know how hideous the consequences may be, how revolting, how menacing to the future of the race. When we come to appreciate these consequences in all their horror, bitterly we shall realize our shortsightedness in maintaining conditions that make them possible. And quickly we shall set about putting our civilization in order!

THERE is another form of cleanliness that is sometimes ignored, cleanliness of outlook. There are those who, while perhaps clean in body and in morals, nevertheless look out on life through a musty consciousness, never thoroughly swept and dusted, never properly aired, never opened out to the sunshine. Hence, so much of the loose, mistaken, involved, prejudiced thinking in the world. Hence, so much of the foolish arguing, the ill feeling engendered through differences of opinion, the wasteful division into hostile, intellectual groups, all sincere, all misguided, all working against one another in the name of righteousness and progress.

Perhaps this kind of intellectual uncleanness is the most distressing.

If we could reach absolute intellectual cleanliness we might find the way clear to reaching nearly all the other kinds of cleanliness!

THE HIGHEST kind of cleanliness we seldom hear spoken of, cleanliness of soul. And yet we often refer to people as being "whole-souled." We mean that those people have the rare gift of yielding themselves completely to their more generous impulses. The whole-souled people may usually be found among those who possess cleanliness of soul. For cleanliness of soul means identification of the spiritual nature with the regenerative forces that make for right living, for enlightenment and for the welfare of the whole race. It is only here and there, among the



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great leaders, that we can find notable evidences of cleanliness of soul. And yet it may exist all about us, among those who, without being in any way conspicuous, are nevertheless in harmony with the spirit of truth.

AND WHAT does the spirit of truth teach? Does it not teach that all cleanliness is related to cleanliness of soul? If we were clean of soul we could not endure the conditions economic and social that developed all the other kinds of cleanliness. We could not look with complacency on the conditions of the slums in the great cities, such as London and New York. We should know that such uncleanness reflected itself in our own souls and that our superiority to it, our aloofness from it, our feeling that we could not in any way be related to it or responsible for it, was one of the saddest proofs of our own uncleanness.

## LINCOLN

**L**INCOLN left behind little to prove his right to distinction. It was his spirit, far more than any achievement, that made him fine. It was more what he was and what he felt than what he did. And yet, already, his fame is sure. For, of American heroes, though among the most recent, he is already the most romantic, the object of the most interest and of the deepest reverence. Observe, for example, the way Phillips Brooks once summed him up: "There are men as good as he, but they do bad things. There are men as intelligent as he, but they do foolish things. In him goodness and intelligence combined and made their best result of wisdom." It was the combined goodness and intelligence of Lincoln that made him the great American democrat. To the nation founded on democracy and yet so fearful of the security of its foundation, so mistrustful of itself, both of its women and of its men, he came to offer the lesson of the democratic spirit. He was its embodiment, the proof that, under circumstances that might have driven the nation to despair, it could work for righteousness.

LINCOLN was a late achiever. At the time when men are beginning to show whether they are in the success zone he was close to failure. The son of a rover, born to poverty, he turned from one small occupation to another. His tall, lank form, his plain face and his drawl must have made his inconspicuousness all the more contradictory and absurd. The chance that gave him a postmaster-ship in a small town enabled him to find time to study law. Now his natural qualities asserted themselves, his determined character, his faculty for getting at the kernel

of a problem and for making it luminous through illustration drawn from experience. Once admitted to the bar, he was on the high road to his destiny. And yet, years later, while he was President, in reply to a question from Emerson whether a man could practice law and yet do as he would be done by, his only answer was a sigh. The fact was he clearly recognized, as most men do today, that there was a wide difference between man-made law and the ideal of justice, and that man-made law could be made a bulwark of injustice. This knowledge he put to generous service in his practice by insisting that the most honorable course for a lawyer was to keep, so far as he could, all his clients out of court and to help them settle their disputes without placing themselves in the clutches of legal technicality.

As soon as Lincoln became prominent there were those who were eager to proclaim his kinship with a family that held an honorable place in American life. Their efforts must have appealed to his sense of humor. It is true that he did come of sturdy English stock by way of New England, where other Lincolns had won a measure of success in public service. By going back far enough the humblest might ally themselves with the greatest. No one would deny that Adam belonged to one of the first families, no one but a hypercritical Darwinian. Genealogy would lose its fashionable appeal if it were without limits. When Lincoln first heard of his distinguished ancestry, if he gave any heed to it at all, he was probably made the more keenly aware of his own insignificance as a poor relation. The hardships of his boyhood helped to give the turn to his nature that, in maturity, developed into a profound depression. They had sympathetic, almost sentimental material to work on. The youthful love affairs of Lincoln reveal strong emotional feeling. From the point of view of his later career

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they make strangely contradictory reading. And yet his marriage appears to have been one of the least sentimental acts of his life. On the day of the wedding, as he was leaving home, some one asked him where he was going. He replied: "To hell, I guess." It remains to his credit that, in spite of his trials in this union, he bore the vagaries of his wife with sublime patience. His love for children extended beyond his own children. Only a man of tenderest understanding could have written that simple letter of sympathy to the mother who had lost five sons in defense of the country.

THERE was a direct relation between the sadness of Lincoln and the merriment. Such extremes often exist in one nature. Indeed, they seem to reflect each other, occasionally, by reaction, to cause each other. Lincoln found relief from care and depression by abandoning himself to intervals of hilarious wit and story telling. His use of stories showed a kind of genius. By a story he could make a seemingly abstruse reason or a difficult point as clear as daylight. In his writing he was more serious, giving expression to another kind of genius. It was his love of truth and simplicity that made him a great artist. For all his violations of taste in his story telling he could reveal perfect taste in his expression of lofty ideas. Perhaps one explanation lay in his early reading. His few books were great books and, by reading them again and again, he became inspired with the spirit of good literature. One was the Bible, that monument of history and ethics and religion, expressed in pure and noble speech.

AFTER a holiday, celebrating a figure like Lincoln, one sometimes wonders how much it means to the people at large. Do they think of the great figure? Or do they merely enjoy the holiday? Surely it is something for

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them to have the holiday to enjoy. The great figure, if he can look down, must enjoy it with them. It must be a gratification to him that he has contributed the holiday to the overworked nation. And in the general forgetfulness, his tolerance may find a certain solace, not without humor.

Always there are those who offer reminders of the meaning of the holiday, the educators and the other official guardians and advisers of the race, self-appointed or otherwise. The schools, of course, have done a good deal to celebrate Lincoln. I wonder how close the celebrations and reminders bring those concerned to Lincoln, to the real man.

WITH TIME, so many heroes became figure-heads, mere examples of greatness, aloof, severe, unhuman. It is probable that Lincoln will escape this tragedy. He was, above all things, human, the kind of figure that people often call, some people with respect, other people with derision, a common man. He was essentially of the people, homely, rugged, in many ways crude, often coarse in his talk, fundamentally humorous, a rich sharer in the precious heritage of laughter characteristic of the Western American. He was destined to become the saddest figure in American history, the most isolated, the loneliest. And the combination of qualities makes him the most appealing of American heroes, for the reason that it makes him the most human.

OCCASIONALLY a great man finds a host of public imitators. Lincoln was not such a great man. You never hear it said of any one that he tries to be like Lincoln. You seldom hear of any one who tries to be like Christ. But you hear of plenty of men who long to be like Napoleon, to be conquerors, powerful in action, in achievement, in dominance over other men. I know several

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men who admire Napoleon so intensely that to them he is like a god. They collect books relating to him and relics. Always they are dominating characters and through their admiration their desire to dominate thrives. There are men who pride themselves on looking like Napoleon and who cultivate the resemblance by letting a lock of hair fall over their foreheads and by displaying an arrogant demeanor. On the whole, the example of Napoleon has not worked for good. Arrogance is its note, a detestable quality.

The keynote of Christ's example is humility.

In our competitive life humility is at a discount.

Humility is included in the homely qualities of Lincoln.

AND YET, somewhat as the example of Christ has influenced men, inspiring them, not to worldly achievement, but to self-mastery and every-day service, the example of Lincoln must have inspired other Americans, strengthening their courage, renewing their faith.

IT IS wholesome for us to bear in mind that during a long period Lincoln was, to many people, a comic figure. When he was nominated for the Presidency he was derided by many highly esteemed Americans. They applied a severe term of reproach to him, "wood-chopper." They despised him because in his youth he had done hard manual labor. He had not chopped wood as Gladstone chopped trees, in patrician fashion, for sheer love of work as a sport and as a means of exercise. At the time wood-chopping was the only work he could get to do.

IN ENGLAND they held Lincoln up to scorn and contempt, that is, the superior classes. To them he was a barbarian, an outsider. His final martyrdom, a violent death at the hands of a poor, misguided young enthusiast for a lost

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cause, was as nothing compared with the abuse he endured during the years of his greatest service to the nation and to the world. England saw her blunder and offered amends. The apology of *Punch*, just after the death of Lincoln, for its misunderstanding and ridicule of him, is one of the most beautiful things in literature.

SHOCKING as the circumstances were, the end of Lincoln had a sublimity becoming his character. And the world was brought to a realization of his qualities all the more keen because it saw they had never before been so needed by the nation.

The divine mystery of bereavement was never more impressive than in this taking away, never more insoluble.

It is inspiring to see where Lincoln was led by his simple wisdom. It made him supreme as a man, as a statesman, as an orator, as a writer.

His simplicity seemed to unlock all doors for him, to offer inspired guidance. And his humor helped to give him relief from strain, as well as balance, patience, understanding. His Gettysburg address must always remain the wonder and the despair of writers. It is the perfection of literary technique, of taste, of quiet, noble presentation of lofty ideas. It seems almost inconceivable that it should have been written on the back of an envelope while Lincoln was speeding in the train to the battlefield.

LINCOLN's life shows the power of being, as compared with striving to be, or striving to seem. Lincoln did not care how he seemed. He simply was right-minded. The rest followed. The marvel of his career is that there is nothing in it that is marvelous. We think of him as exceptional because the circumstances of his later life were dramatic. But he was truly a representative

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of a fairly large class of Americans. He stood for sober virtues that seldom win wide recognition save when, by force of circumstance, they are called out to meet an emergency.

There were unquestionably many Lincolns in this country while Lincoln was active. There have been many other Lincolns born since Lincoln's death. And there are many Lincolns still to be. Here is the hope of our representative government, its real security.

LINCOLN was cut down just when he stood ready to meet what might have become his greatest opportunity for service. How different his influence might have made the history of the reconstruction. And yet what can we tell by surmising? Tragic as his death was and saddening to the nation, it came at a glorious time. It gave the world a life that reached to a thrilling climax and, unlike so many great lives, stopped there. For this reason the career of Lincoln must always convey its lesson the more powerfully. And now, of all times, it asks us to reflect on what his attitude would be toward the issue before men today, accepted as the most vital issue in the history of the world. Fortunately, he recognized its importance as far back as fifty years ago and unequivocally expressed his opinion: "Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the product of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration."

If Lincoln were alive now we know where he would stand socially and economically. Happily, in a very true sense, in his grave he is beyond the reach of the grave. "He being dead, yet liveth." His spirit is inspiring the Lincolns of today. It will inspire the future Lincolns.



## CARING

**T**HERE was a boy I used to know in school who had great difficulty in speaking. He never could express just what he meant and he stammered painfully. And yet he had plenty of things to say. I used to think that his trouble chiefly resulted from his trying to say more than one thing at a time.

He used to confide to me his distress and his envy of those who could speak freely and easily.

He is now a distinguished lawyer, an able pleader, fluent in speech and accurate.

He got what he wished because he cared so much, because he cared enough.

YOU must be acquainted with at least one of these boys who rig up wireless apparatus on the roof. Some of them seem to be very stupid about everything in the world except wireless and other matters pertaining to electricity.

No matter how dull they may seem, let the subject of wireless be mentioned and their faces will light up. They will become eloquent, inspired.

IN A CITY of the Middle West there is a man who has an extraordinary knowledge of American history. Off-hand he can give lists of the cabinets of various Presidents, names of figures once prominent in public life and now forgotten, as well as odd bits of information, perhaps not included in the books.

I once asked him how he happened to have such a wonderful memory.

He smiled and replied quite frankly: "Oh, I really haven't a very good memory. My wife, for example, has a very much better memory than I have. She is

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always reminding me of things I have forgotten. But ever since I was a boy I've liked reading about the history of my own country."

THERE was a ribald old professor in college who had a saying that has stayed in my mind: "It's a great thing in this world to have some subject by the tail."

What the figure lacked in elegance it gained in vigor. It suggested careering over the world behind a wild animal.

Caring sends one joyously careering behind an interest that never ceases to provide the excitement of the chase.

They who lack such an interest are poor indeed.

IN THIS regard the old educators were sadly off the track. They believed in driving the children along the steep and rugged road. The harder the road, the fiercer the driving, and the better off the children.

The educators of today know better. They know how joyously the children will bound over the road when they really care about their tasks.

For where there is caring, tasks cease to be tasks.

Those boys who are crazy over wireless don't think of their labor over their apparatus as a task.

It is all sport.

AND JUST as caring is the key to education, it is the key to living.

There is that oft-quoted saying of Goethe's that in traveling we get as much out of a new place as we take there.

We get as much out of our every-day relations as we give.

We get as much as we care to get.

Most of our denials are self-denials.

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And yet most of our conscious self-denials are not self-denials at all. They are rewards.

It all depends on what we really care for. We get it if we only care enough.

BUT to this law there is one supreme exception: If we care simply and solely for ourselves we get nothing.

Fortunately there is no such thing as caring simply and solely for ourselves. Every one of us cares for something outside ourselves or for some one.

If such were not the case death would speedily follow.

Our well-being is the direct result of our wise caring.

So it is important for us to care wisely.

Then we shall care more and more.

For caring grows by caring, just as evil develops more evil and goodness flowers into goodness more abundant.

IF WE cared wisely and deeply everything in the world would straighten itself out. We should be amazed at the change in ourselves. Then we should marvel at the change in the people about us.

Yes, caring is the whole secret.

By its power it keeps the universe from falling into chaos.

This power we call attraction, which is, of course, merely another word for caring.

And caring is the way by which the world approximates harmony and happiness.

It is only when we have learned to care that we can delve into the inexhaustible richness of living.

Look at the people about you, the people you know best.

Select from among them a few that you know to be happy.

We all know at least a few people who may be called happy.

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Let us see if we can find out their secret.

In every instance we shall surely find that they have one quality in common, a genius for caring.

I have in mind one such person, a woman, still young, though not young in years. I have known her all my life. Always, in spite of bearing her share of trouble, she has been happy.

People say that she has "a happy disposition."

Her most noticeable quality is her indifference to herself, her unconsciousness.

She is always thinking of other people and thinking of them pleasantly.

For her all people have a great attraction. On trains, in street cars, on pleasure boats, she is continually falling into smiling conversation with her neighbors, people that she has never seen before, that she will probably never see again.

And just as other people attract her, she attracts other people.

She gives generously. Richly she receives.

The whole explanation lies in caring.

A LAWYER in New York City has a great fondness for languages. He has a fine ear for niceties of speech and the imitative instinct that so often goes with a fine ear. In his pocket he carries a little book that he studies whenever he has a few moments' leisure. In these moments he gleans the rudiments of various languages. And whenever he gets a chance he puts them into practice.

For example, he speaks Italian with the men who black his boots in the morning, and French and German with his French and German clients.

Languages are his chief diversion. He really loves them. In them he sees all kinds of little human expressions that most of us who have perfunctorily studied this language or that wholly miss.

## CARING

It is wonderful what caring can do and what it can see and what it can attract to itself and achieve.

IN LONDON I became interested in a curious old man I used to see on cold winter days feeding the birds in Hyde Park.

One morning I ventured to speak to him.

Soon I found myself deep in a talk about the birds. He did most of the talking. I was amazed by his knowledge of the habits of the birds, of his marvelous understanding of birds, and by the delight he took in everything relating to birds.

And then I saw that those birds were the great interest in his life.

He cared for them and he felt that they needed his care.

That care gave his existence a meaning.

It also explained why the birds flew about him without fear.

ONE OFTEN hears people say, "I don't care."

And one often hears the words spoken as if they conferred some credit on the speaker, as if the speaker showed he was superior to caring.

When we cease to care, we are nearly always the losers.

Those who care least in the world are the most to be pitied.

"I DON'T care," may be one of the most dreadful of all expressions.

Often we hear people say, or we hear of people who say, "I don't care to live any longer."

If we analyzed those words we should find they meant that the speaker renounced everything beautiful and worthy of being cared for.

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And if we knew the speaker we should find that his interests centered in himself. He was the whole world. When his interests went wrong the whole world went wrong.

Of course, when caring ceases, life is virtually at an end.

So we should guard this faculty of caring.

We should know it for the precious thing that it is.

Just now, among the echoes of the social unrest, we hear a good deal about caring and not caring. The thing that used to be ranked among the things most worthy of being cared for has fallen into disrepute.

There are many workers who declare that they don't care for their work. They even go farther. They denounce those of their fellow-workers who say they do care for their work. They say it is shameful for such workers to care for their work. The reason is that such work is not worthy of being cared for. It is degrading, or crippling, or inadequately paid. And in most cases what they say is true.

What was obviously a blessing to mankind, a source of absorbing interest, of noble achievement, has been turned into a curse.

Men, once free to use their faculties in wholesome labor, are now, by thousands, enslaved, reduced to being mere tenders of machines.

That this condition should be so is a curse to the world.

And all because what should be an inspiration to caring has become an inspiration to not caring, to hating.

The man who cannot love his work cannot love his life.

How CAN it be that one of the greatest blessings of the world has been turned into one of the greatest curses?

Why have so many human beings, women and children

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as well as men, had their lives cursed with degrading, ill-paid labor?

Simply, of course, because men, the most successful, have put this curse upon them.

And why have the successful put this curse on their fellow-creatures?

Because they do not care for their fellow-creatures.

Because they care only for themselves.

If they cared for their fellow-creatures as they cared for themselves they couldn't endure putting such a burden on their fellow-creatures.

YES, CARING is everything.

Centuries ago the thought was expressed in words so familiar to us that we seldom stop to take in their full meaning:

"Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto this: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

## AUTHORITY

**A** FRIEND said to me the other day: "When I went through the galleries of Europe I was amazed at the difference in the work of the old masters of different periods. The master of one period and his followers would paint in one style, and the master of another period and his followers would paint in another style. The difference made me think about authority. Each master was the authority of his day. His opinions on art were law. They stood for orthodoxy and for culture, the highest expression in art of the time. Those who did not agree were the outsiders. Many people who did not understand either accepted the master's dictation or pretended to accept it. Then some other fellow would come along and, with another set of ideas, would establish the same authority, together with the same tyranny."

THOSE remarks started me on a train of thought. Not only in art, but in science, in literature, in all the departments of life, may be found similar conditions. There are always those who establish themselves in authority. Their word is law. Those who disagree are subjects for contempt or pity.

I OFTEN think with some amusement of an experience I once had with a group of French and English and American painters in a small village of Normandy. Like most painters, they loved their work. They were enthusiasts. Most of them had been attracted to this village by the presence there of a celebrated impressionist. So most of them were impressionists. Those who did not believe in impressionism they were inclined to regard either as



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enemies or as poor, ignorant creatures. Whenever an opinion relating to art was presented by one who did not sympathize with their views they would administer severe punishment.

On one occasion, at dinner, a traveling Englishman ventured to praise a certain picture that had been exhibited in the recent Salon in Paris, by a celebrated painter.

When, in his innocence, he had expatiated upon its beauties, one of the impressionists fixed a reproving eye on him and said:

"You really liked that picture, did you?"

The Englishman looked a little astonished. "Certainly," he said, with a flash, suggesting that he was offended at having his words doubted.

"Then God help you!" said the impressionist.

IN THIS matter of opinion we all do a good deal of pitying. And most of such pity is not only unnecessary, but harmful as well. It reflects discredit, not on those we pity, but on ourselves.

I know people who become furious for the simple reason that others share opinions different from their own. They would be resentful if they knew that the others felt in exactly the same way toward them.

Even among scientific men, where we might expect to find more breadth of mind, one sees the same tendencies at work. There are scientific men who feel intense hatred for other scientific men simply and solely on account of difference in opinion. They will even go to the extreme of lying about one another's opinions in order to enhance the apparent superiority of their own opinions.

And yet those men know, just as you and I know, that science is continually contradicting itself, that the discovery of today may be modified or wholly denied or made absurd by the discovery of tomorrow.

#### AUTHORITY

It is among religions that we have the most right to expect breadth of view. For in itself religion is breadth.

We may forgive much to human weakness and to enthusiasm for the cause of art, or literature, or science. But surely, religion would not ask for any such tolerance. It is in itself a bulwark against human weakness. Its teachings are essentially founded on love and on self-forgetfulness.

Yet what do we find when we go among people who take special pride in their religious belief?

We find that as a rule they are intolerant.

Though they profess to believe there is but one God, they make gods of themselves.

And the gods they make are cruel gods.

## THE REJECTORS

**I**N ONE of our big cities there lives a very rich man. He was born to wealth and he has always had the opportunities that wealth brings. He is very well educated and, of course, superlatively cultivated. And he has a large acquaintance among the important people of the earth.

Nevertheless he is one of the most unhappy men imaginable. The reason is that he has the habit of expecting human beings to live up to his standards. With severity he judges the people that he meets. If they do not satisfy him he rejects them.

He has grown more and more severe in his attitude toward life. Consequently, life has grown more and more severe toward him.

And yet, in spite of his years of bitter experience, he has not yet discovered the truth of the saying which nowadays, in varying forms, we hear echoed and re-echoed, that life is a mirror, reflecting back to us ourselves.

THERE is a literary man of my acquaintance who takes a similar attitude. He insists that all the people he makes friends with shall be interesting, that is, intellectually interesting. The people he does not find intellectually interesting he despises and speaks of with scorn. Consequently, he often finds himself very isolated. He also suffers a good deal from his own scorn.

In spite of all his intuition and knowledge of the world, he does not know that scorn is a poison.

**W**E ARE all aware of the existence of that large class of persons who reject others on account of considerations of birth or social connections or wealth.

In fact, as one looks about, it is appalling to discover how much rejecting there is in the world.

## THE REJECTORS

And still more amazing is the pride which people take in rejecting. They seem to think that rejecting reflects credit on themselves. The more people they reject the more convinced they become of their own superiority.

Meanwhile they remain serenely unconscious that, through their rejections, they are putting a tax upon themselves, sustaining a loss.

AND YET I have noticed that the rejectors of the world are always alert for themselves. They show remarkable skill in securing what they believe to be their advantage. Nevertheless they are invariably losers. In nearly every instance if you will watch you will find that they are unhappy.

Meanwhile, those who never think about rejecting others, who accept others as human beings exactly like themselves, and get the best out of the people about them, go comfortably through life.

After all, it is a matter of adjustment. The moment we demand that the world shall adjust itself to us we lose. The moment we make up our minds that the only course is to adjust ourselves to the world we gain.

Sometimes it seems to me that here lies the whole secret.

It is what the literary folk call a paradox.

It is caring, not for oneself, but for the people and the things outside.

And the less one cares for oneself and the more one cares for the things and the people outside the more one gains for oneself.

IN OUR acquaintance we all know rejectors. Sometimes they reject us, either openly or covertly.

Often we hear them boast of their capacity for being bored. They forget that it invariably accompanies the capacity for boring.

## THE REJECTORS

As soon as you hear any one say that he is easily bored you may be sure that it is easy for him to bore others, and that others often suffer in his presence.

For superiority that is conscious of itself is a burden, not merely to oneself alone, but to all those obliged to meet it.

AT THIS moment I am reminded of a friend who during the past few years has sustained bitter trials and disappointments. He has been going through one of those strange periods when troubles come not singly, but in battalions.

Some of his relatives and close friends worry about him and pity him. But their pity and their worry are wasted. For he can rise above any trouble.

The reason is that a life-long habit of forgetting himself and becoming absorbed in interests outside himself has given him freedom. He has never been a rejector of good. He has accepted it or it has come his way. He has rejected only evil.

He recently sustained a terrible loss by death. It was generally expected that he would be crushed with grief. He was grieved, deeply and sincerely; but his interest in things outside him saved him from being prostrated.

Those who started to offer him sympathy and to grieve with him were surprised and in some instances shocked that he did not show more grief.

They thought that his attitude showed indifference. It did show a noble indifference to self, one of the hardest things in the world to reach and one of the richest in its rewards, the saving grace.

## CRIPPLES

**R**HEUMATISM has descended upon a friend. Once the liveliest of men, he now walks with a stick, slowly and painfully. Fortunately he is a philosopher. "There are compensations in everything," he said to me recently. "I never before realized what a blessed thing it was to be able to walk. I see people in the street walking easily and jauntily and I have to remind myself with some astonishment that once I could walk in that way. I envy those people and I envy myself as I used to be. I wonder why it is that I didn't realize how lucky I was."

His eyes twinkled with humor and even in the twinge of pain that suddenly expressed itself in his face, there was the light of a smile.

"But think how much you will enjoy walking when you get well again," I said.

The twinge of pain had passed and he was having momentary relief. "Of course, I know I shall get well; but I don't feel that I shall. Can't you appreciate the difference? However, even in being a cripple there are compensations. It makes me realize how many cripples there are in the world and how little sympathy I used to have for them. Now they come up to me, the cripples of the present and the people who used to be cripples, and they tell me what they have been through. It's really a comfort. It's surprising," he concluded, after yielding to another twinge, "how many unsuspected cripples we have all about us. It's only because they know that I am in a position to sympathize with them that they reveal themselves to me."

It is easy for most of us to sympathize with the physical cripples. Consciously or unconsciously we all try to make

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up to them in such small ways as we can for what they have lost. But for the unsuspected cripples how little we can do. They live in a world apart. It is only by a sensitive imagination that we can reach them. Often, indeed, they don't wish to be reached. They would resent intrusion. Many of them, too, would be indignant if they knew they were suspected of being cripples.

THERE is a very brilliant man of my acquaintance whose life is devoted to intellectual work. For many years he has been a lecturer in a great university. He has strong opinions which he asserts with great vigor. Those opinions that disagree with his he ruthlessly assaults. The same ruthlessness he deals out to the persons who hold the opposing opinions. Naturally, his teaching has tended to make him more and more dogmatic. It has apparently never occurred to him that there may be more than one way of looking at the same thing, that there may be, in fact, many ways. The only way that he can understand or be patient with is his own way. Consequently, he causes a great deal of ill feeling about him and he is continually suffering from ill feeling himself.

In his attitude toward the world he betrays his amazement and bewilderment that people don't agree with him and dislike him. He feels sure that if he could only force his opinions on society the whole world would be set right. Each year of his life he grows more pessimistic and more bitter and despairing. He is, of course, a perfect example of the intellectual cripple, of the man imprisoned within himself. Mentally he is exactly like my friend temporarily afflicted with rheumatism, only his case is much worse. It does not even permit him to go out of the house. It has made him a chronic invalid, an intellectual shut-in.

WE ARE all in a sense intellectual cripples, shut into our consciousness, held back by our own bounds from reaching

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out into the world. We may be able to reach out in this direction or that, and yet fail lamentably when we try to reach out in some other direction. Or perhaps our failure lies in our never wishing to reach out, in never realizing the importance of trying.

We often hear people express their satisfaction with themselves, their lack of dependence on other people, their complete absence of interest in others. It is exactly as if a prisoner were to boast of the beauty and charm of his prison life, and were to declare that, for him, it was the ideal way of living. How we should pity him! And how we should blame the society that had drawn him down to such abasement!

We never think of blaming society for the intellectual cripples which it has created all about us, the self-satisfied ones of the earth, enjoying temporary advantage which they may have reached through their very lack of sympathy and through the opportunities for the exploitation of their fellow men which they find provided by society itself.

BUT IT is toward our moral cripples that we have shown the least consideration. Afflicted as they are, far worse than the physical cripples, whom we are so eager to pity and to help, the moment we detect them we heap upon them more affliction. It is as if we were to take the crippled body and, in those parts where they have been mercifully allowed to be sound, were to try to injure them further.

And yet, deep down in our own minds, where we keep our little personal secrets, we know that in some way each of us is a moral cripple. But when we speak of moral cripples we are very careful not to identify ourselves with them. To hear most of us talk one would think we were not in any way related to the moral cripples. We call them names that we could not possibly apply to ourselves.



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We denounce them. We punish them. We segregate them in places where their moral weakness will thrive and where they will be exposed to other moral weakness.

DID you ever think of the marvels of modern surgery? They give the promise of saving most of the physical cripples of the world. Already, cripples who would once have been considered incurables are now finding complete cure. It looks as if the time may not be far distant when there will be very few physical cripples, perhaps none.

And while this wonderful work is going on what are we doing for our intellectual cripples and for our moral cripples?

## "BEATING PEOPLE DOWN"

**S**EVERAL years ago in New York City I went to a dinner party where there were several guests known for their wit. I expected to have a fine evening. Most of the guests were fairly well acquainted and quickly showed that they felt at ease. Among them was a woman, known for her wealth, a social authority. A few moments after the dinner began there was general talk. Then a subject was introduced which greatly excited the social authority. She leaned forward in her seat and at once took possession of the talk. Those who disagreed with her she silenced by her frank expressions of resentment and of conviction that she was in the right. Quickly she reduced that table to subjection. During the rest of the meal she did most of the talking. Whenever a subject came up that interested her she would utter a pronouncement which made further discussion impossible.

Occasionally I would catch very subtle glances, not exactly exchanges of glance, but veiled looks, which told me that this woman was doing exactly what she had often done before.

But the woman had no suspicion. She went on excitedly, taking great pleasure in telling us what we ought to believe.

AN OLD-FASHIONED expression I often used to hear as a boy is, "Beating people down." There was a man who used to come to our house, and as soon as he left some one would be sure to say something like, "What an unpleasant habit he has of beating people down."

To this day I think of the expression whenever I meet any one who, for the sake of establishing his opinions,

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undertakes to beat people down because they venture to express their opinions.

IT MUST be admitted that those who "beat people down" add to the interest and excitement of life. Where they dwell there is no dullness, no monotony. Their fondness for strongly expressing opinions sometimes gives them the reputation of being strong characters. If self-assertion is an expression of strength they surely are strong. But there are those who believe that the higher proof of strength is to be found, not in self-assertion, but in self-control. In this quality those who beat others down are woefully lacking. They strive to control others, never themselves. And they seldom stop to consider that the stronger their control of others becomes the weaker their self-control is sure to be.

THOSE who beat others down must look upon life as a kind of arena. To them each day brings its conflict. Wherever they go they find themselves involved in argument and antagonism. For, naturally, they are continually meeting people whose opinions do not jibe with their own and whose feelings, by being so ruthlessly assaulted, are severely damaged. In many cases these people, on finding themselves beaten down, become exceedingly resentful. And resentment in turn creates in the mind of the assailants further resentment. So it is not surprising that natures continually trying to beat down other natures often involve themselves in serious complications, sometimes ending in disaster.

SUCH CONSEQUENCES are, of course, uncommon in our more civilized communities. But the beating down goes on there just the same. Often the greatest intellectual despots are to be found among those who are considered the most civilized. They are both women and men who become angry the very instant they hear expressed an

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opinion they don't agree with. They feel a desire, not only to refute the opinion, but to punish the one that holds the opinion.

We have all been present at scenes where perfectly innocent people have been severely chastised as a result of an honest expression of thought. Occasionally it is amusing to see on their faces expressions of bewilderment and dismay and anger. And yet it is pitiful, too. Occasionally they will be too startled to reply. On the other hand, if they have themselves any of the instinct to beat down, they at once indulge in furious warfare.

WHEN we know well those who like to beat others down we have a certain protection. We become careful. If we love peace we hold back those opinions that are likely to create a disturbance. On the other hand, however, we can never be perfectly secure, for we can never be certain just how far we can go or just which subjects are to be avoided. With some people there is never safety. The mere mention on our part of a name may excite wrath, for among those who habitually beat down others, the names of people become associated with opinions that have to be immediately annihilated.

PERHAPS the greatest harm done by the habit of "beating people down" is that among peace-lovers and the timid it tends to encourage deceit. Rather than get into trouble there are many who will go so far as to deny some of their most cherished views. There is a still larger class who, while holding to their opinions, will resort to insidious methods to escape from exposing themselves to rebuke.

In either case the consequences are deplorable, destroying that spirit of frankness and of good fellowship and of trust so essential to wholesome and happy social relations.

Incidentally, the habit of "beating people down" damages the quality of talk.

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It also tends to silence many of those whose opinions may be most valuable.

We have all had the experience of being in groups, where the most interesting people were given no chance, where the talk was controlled by those who mainly echoed, and rattled, and noisily asserted. For, almost invariably, those who have the best things to say, the result of quiet observings and thinkings, are the slowest to push themselves forward, the readiest to yield. They never indulge in "beating people down."

## THE KINDNESS OF THE POOR

**E**LLEN TERRY, during an American tour, presented a remarkably fine play from the Dutch, called "The Good Hope." She appeared as an old fisherwoman who gave up to the sea everything she loved in life. When loss on loss had fallen upon her, she lost her last son, her favorite, the hope of her age. To save money, the owners of the vessel the boy was forced to ship on had failed to make reasonable provision for safety. They had, of course, protected themselves by insurance. So to them the foundering of the ship was of little concern. At the close of the play the old woman was seen in the office of the ship owners and was presented by one of the ship owners' kind-hearted women folk with a bowl of soup. Very respectfully and gratefully she accepted it. Then, slowly and with dignity, carrying the bowl in both hands, she walked out of the office, the embodiment of meek and lowly suffering.

If Ellen Terry had done nothing else in her whole career, the way she played that little scene would have shown her to be a great actress. Only a fine and sympathetic spirit could have conceived and realized the character under such circumstances. The old woman, crossing the stage in her cheap clothes and her heavy wooden shoes, will always remain with me as one of the wonderful achievements of acting. It illustrated far more vividly than any word could do the patience of the poor with the rich, their forbearance, their kindness.

IN EUROPE the situation is more plain than in this country. I shall never forget the amusement I felt on my first day in London when I rode in an elevator, or, as they say over there, in a "lift." There were several others in the car. As we went from floor to floor and

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as some of us passed out, the elevator man would say, with an air of profound respect, "Thank you."

That little incident was typical of many incidents that I was to witness in England and on the Continent. They all expressed what seemed to me a strange attitude. Those people showed that they were grateful for being allowed to live. For this privilege they felt that they must show their superiors all kinds of gratuitous courtesies.

AT THAT time we were having the bicycle craze. I made several trips on a wheel in England and in France. It was both amusing and pathetic to note the deferential kindness of the poor wherever we went. They apparently thought because we had leisure to go tearing about the country we must be in some way worthy of special consideration. In France, as we passed, old women would bob quaintly as we passed and say, "Good day, gentlemen and ladies."

IN THE etiquette books there is one consideration in regard to manners that we never read about, what we owe from the example of the poor. The assumption seems to be that it is the well-to-do that have the best manners. Here is one of those illusions that we accept as truths simply because we don't stop to think about them. As if there could be any manners in the world worse than those that either openly or covertly convey the sense of patronage!

For pure kindness, for the resignation of self in favor of others, there are no manners that can compare with the manners of the poor.

SOMETIMES people complain of the familiarity of inferiors. At the slightest intimation that an inferior is growing familiar they are likely to show great resentment. But the familiarity of the poor is very slight as compared

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with the familiarity of the well-to-do in their attitude toward the poor. Indeed, advantage opens the door to all kinds of familiarity with those less fortunate, intrusion into private affairs, the asking of intimate, personal questions, the giving of unsolicited advice, and the use of first names. One of the quickest ways by which superiority is asserted and established is by means of familiar address. But the inferior must never take the same liberties. On the contrary, they must show here, as in so many other situations in life, patience and kindness.

IN NEARLY all the affairs of life the poor are constantly showing kindness to those more fortunate than themselves. I have even seen them give up seats in street cars to the better-dressed, though they have paid the same amount of carfare. And I have seen them show wonderful forbearance when the better-dressed have betrayed annoyance or resentment at being obliged to sit beside them. I once heard a man, a well-dressed man, too, give a fashionably attired woman a severe reprimand for behavior of this kind. To her companion, dressed in expensive clothes like herself, she openly spoke of her annoyance at being obliged to herd with "such awful people." "If you don't want to herd with such awful people," the man exclaimed, "you ought not to ride in a public conveyance. You ought to ride in your own carriage."

Some of the ill-clad who looked on smiled. But most of them merely showed astonishment.

THE POOR are always at a disadvantage. They are always giving to those better off. Even in church you will find them in what we call "the poorest places." Whenever they thrust themselves forward, instead of being welcomed because of their needs, they are resented. And if, as occasionally happens, they forget their man-



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ners, they are treated as if they were habitual and outrageous offenders. The truth is that they are the most retiring and the most obliging and the kindest people in the world. They are continually reminded of what is given them. But the world, till lately, has been unaware of how much they give, how unselfish they are, how prodigal.

### "FLOURISHES ADDED ON"

**S**INCE I heard Professor George Santayana's phrase it has occurred to me many times. It finds a wide variety of application. It represents a vast amount of superfluous energy in life and in art, which, after all, is essentially life's reflection. If we could avoid "flourishes added on" art would be much more beautiful and satisfying, much wider spread, much more appreciated and enjoyed. And life would be far simpler.

THE OTHER night I went to see the performance of a popular play, given by actors supposed to be expert. The play passed for a representation of life. But, in many ways, the representation was false. It consisted largely of "flourishes added on." The dramatist, instead of being faithful to human experience, thought he could improve on it by the introduction of impossible incidents and unnatural representation of character. The actors, too, had their "flourishes added on." Perhaps they might have found an excuse in their playing according to the spirit of the author. And yet, through their affectations, they made the play seem all the more insincere and unreal.

That evening at the theater gave me a keen realization of the folly of "flourishes added on." In the drama, so many of our plays and so much of our acting consist of such flourishes. As I watched from my seat I wondered why these were so assiduously cultivated. Perhaps, I reflected, because they seemed hard. Truth to nature would seem to be easy, like all sincere art.

IN EVERY-DAY life we meet people who resemble that playwright and those actors. They are not satisfied with being themselves. They feel that they must have "flourishes added on." It may be their speech that is affected,

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or their manners, or their ideas. Their pretenses are constantly getting in the way. They apparently think that they can make the false seem not only like the true, but better. The fact is, of course, that the false can never seem like the true and can never be better. The "flourishes added on" must reveal themselves in their real nature, as pretenses. Instead of being the expression of natural qualities, they have their origin in deceit.

SO MUCH of the writing at the present time is obscured and weakened by "flourishes added on." There are writers who are encouraged by their readers to acquire and develop such flourishes. They finally become unaware of the difference between the real in writing and the false.

When I was in college, in one of our courses, we spent several weeks in studying Carlyle. At the end of that period we had to write compositions on some subject related to our author. It was amusing to see how many Carlyles were developed in that class, that is, Carlyles in manner. So far as I can remember, there was no Carlyle in originality and power of thinking. What those students imitated was simply the peculiarities in Carlyle's style. Now those peculiarities expressed Carlyle. But as soon as they were assumed by the imitators they became comic affectations, "flourishes added on."

Those essays gave our instructor a chance to deliver a homily on the importance of being oneself in writing as in every other expression.

It is true, however, that, in writing, many people develop by means of "flourishes added on." Through imitating others they find themselves. The trouble is the imitators often fail to break through to themselves. They remain imitators all their lives, expressing themselves falsely by means of "flourishes added on."

### "FLOURISHES ADDED ON"

IN ARCHITECTURE the "flourishes added on" are particularly absurd. There they stand, ostensibly as ornaments, but wholly unnecessary excrescences, nearly always hideous. In looking at them we can see the absurdity of all the flourishes that have no reason for being, that do not express the meaning of the thing they belong to. Of recent years, however, there has been a great improvement in architecture. Compare, for example, the old-fashioned houses in most of the American cities with the new. The more pretentious those old-fashioned houses are, the more absurd are the "flourishes added on." They represent one of those strange reactions from really good architecture that make some people believe that progress is only an illusion.

One might think that the simplicity and the charm of the Colonial period would have established good architecture in this country for all time. But fashion soon destroyed most of its graces. Now we are going back to it and to those other architectural forms that begin with utility, and express themselves simply and naturally in beauty.

There is a certain pathos in those cheap little houses that give fantastic, almost gay imitations of the houses of the rich. In most instances the models are bad. The imitations emphasize the original pretentiousness and superfluity of ornamentation. The gaiety they express soon becomes physically unreal. The tawdriness that appears with time turns the architectural into mockery. Then it grows plain that the "flourishes added on" were added to give a transient and wholly fictitious value.

Most "flourishes added on" are, consciously or unconsciously, used for the purpose of deception. I once heard a well-known literary woman criticized for her extravagant affectations of speech. One of her closest friends who happened to be present proceeded to defend

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her. "She is affected," this friend remarked, "and her affectations were deliberately assumed when she began to be successful a great many years ago. She had been brought up in the country and she had acquired very bad habits of speaking. She knew that they would make her ridiculous. Instead of correcting them gradually and acquiring good speech, she assumed that artificial way of talking."

The frankness of this explanation was somewhat extraordinary. It seemed to me to express a blunder that is commonly made. That literary woman might have profited by imitating good speech. But unfortunately her knowledge of speech was not sufficient to enable her to choose a good model. So she did as most conscious imitators do. She imitated "flourishes added on," in this instance, flourishes of a particularly absurd kind.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SAYING "NO"

**W**HEN Tolstoy was a young man he made a rather odd resolution. Whenever any one interrupted him at work he would say quite frankly that he was busy and he would go on working. He had in mind, of course, those transient interruptions that distract us all and cause us so much waste of time and energy. He was living, too, in a period before the invention of the telephone.

So many of us, from sheer weakness, have not the courage to follow Tolstoy's example. If we did we should be spared a great deal of vexation and loss of time. So often we sacrifice duty to a false ideal of politeness. If we spoke up frankly, no reasonable person would be injured. By yielding, we often make ourselves pay, and make others pay, too. The neglect of the task in hand may cause a long series of disturbances.

To do the things, wrongly considered impolite, may require a good deal of courage. Similarly, to say "No" may be one of the hardest tasks in the world. But it is a task that we must learn to perform. And merely performing it is not enough. If it is done at all it ought to be well done. There is such a thing, however, as taking pleasure in saying "No" through sheer love of denial. Some people enjoy denying others. They are like those who have a strong inclination for disagreeing. They would rather say "No" than "Yes." The process gives them the illusion of power, perhaps of superiority. In such cases the ability to say "No" obviously ceases to be a virtue.

LATELY I have been reading the essays of a moralist who dwells on the importance of saying "No." He

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seems to regard it as the basis of morality. Here he agrees with most moralists. He reminds me of my earliest lessons in ethics, consisting almost wholly of prohibitions.

I sometimes wonder if such moralists, in spite of their being so unquestionably on the right path, don't do more harm than good. They make morality very unattractive. And quite unintentionally, of course, they make the violation of the moral law seem alluring.

As a matter of fact, when we look at right and wrong squarely in the face we find that the right course is, in the end, at any rate, always the more pleasurable, the only course that brings returns worth having.

THERE are situations in life where a plain "No" is necessary and a vigorous "No," too. But they are comparatively rare. Indeed, where "No" is used some other word or expression may be far more advisable and yet produce the required result. I have heard people say "No" out loud at times when it is a gross rudeness, when an expression of thanks and of regret at being obliged to decline an invitation would be the suitable reply. In my own acquaintance there is a man who is always saying "No" to friendly proffers. These he regards as temptations, luring him from his work. From his point of view they are indeed temptations; but from the point of view of those who make the proffers they are not temptations at all. They are signs of good-will.

It is possible to let "No" become an expression of self-indulgence, of disregard for other people's feelings. As I write, I am reminded of one of the ablest and one of the busiest men I have ever met. The best of his thought and energy and nearly all of his time he feels that he must devote to his work. But he is wise enough and generous enough not to confuse the attractions offered him

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by the world outside with temptations. In each offer he sees only what is good, that is, the friendly spirit. And he responds to it in kind. His little notes, declining invitations, are delightful expressions of regret. The people who receive them, sometimes, I suspect, those who would like to exploit him, are never offended. On the contrary, they acquire a fresh realization of the man's good-will.

MANY people can avoid the habit of saying "No" and yet proceed successfully and happily through life. Those who do the most efficient work and contribute most to the world's store of good-will are not likely to be included among the asserters of a negation. On negations they waste little time. Quietly and efficiently they devote themselves to what is positive. Instead of denying and resenting, they take a sympathetic attitude and they accept and develop what is good. They allow themselves to be drawn toward the things of life that give the best reward.

PERHAPS it is necessary, in the case of many people, for the insistence to be placed on self-denial. But there is a finer stimulus in the truth so clearly demonstrated by Herbert Spencer that every human being best profits, not by thinking of himself and considering where his advantage lies, but by giving himself freely and eagerly to outside things. In other words, egotism, to be really successful, must express itself through altruism. One might go through life continually saying "No" to temptations without achieving a character worth having, without really contributing anything to the world. There is something to be said for the spirit of moral adventure, that goes resolutely forward, taking risks, seeking for opportunities of expression, forgetting all about the petty denials, caring only for the worth-while achievements.



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There is something almost unwholesome in a continual insistence on self-discipline. It carries with it suggestions of fear. It is far less stimulating than the attitude of affirmation taken, for example, by a man like Robert Browning, who knew that life was good, and asked, not for less life, with its trials and its temptations, its services and its joys, but for more. The fearless man takes little interest in denying. He goes out joyously to meet each day, and each day he affirms the privilege and the wonder of being alive.

## CONTRASTS

**I**N NEW YORK CITY one occasionally sees queer little horse cars, drawn either by two horses or by one horse. There is something amusing about them and quaint. They make a startling contrast as they pass those brand new sky-scrapers with aeroplane landings on top.

At one end of the line of progress are the horse cars. At the other end are the buildings with their facilities for the latest and the most advanced method of locomotion.

What is most astonishing is that the two should exist together, side by side, the proof of progress and the denial of progress.

**H**ERE is an illustration of the history of human life. The old persists with the new. In the midst of progression we may find what looks like retrogression.

While new ideas are moving the world, we may see everywhere expressions of old ideas, generally considered obsolete.

Some of us develop a good deal of resentful feeling about just this kind of situation. We think that progress ought to be evenly distributed. In much of our talk we assume that it is. We call to our aid what we fancy to be logic, to prove that retrogression and progression cannot possibly go together.

And yet, so often the things that can't be, according to our way of thinking, actually are.

**A**N ACQUAINTANCE of mine often says in reply to arguments: "It ought not to be so, but it is." Occasionally he varies the expression by saying: "It can't be so; but it is."

The impossible is often the real, the true.

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Life has a way of disregarding human logic.

Most of the people that we see about us are exactly like the world of progress. No matter how old-fashioned they may be, when we get to know them well enough, we are sure to be surprised by hearing them express modern ideas. Even the most "protected," the most "sheltered" lives can't escape the influence far away.

When we make this kind of discovery, we are likely to be pleased. And yet, when we make virtually the same discovery, we may be displeased. For example, when we hear people we consider advanced expressing old-fashioned notions, we are almost certain to be disappointed, or hurt, or resentful.

The same law is operating.

THOUGH we may recognize the law and find interest in tracing its working in the things and in the people about us, we may yet fail to receive its most important lesson.

We may remain unaware that, just as the law operates in the things and the people that we see, it operates in ourselves.

We can't, however, see ourselves as others see us, no matter how hard we may try. There is no getting away from the slavery imposed on us by our natures, compelling us to believe what we believe. The more conscientiously we believe, the more strongly we trust our thoughts. It is only by an effort of the will and of the imagination that we can force ourselves into an unprejudiced attitude. This effort makes us see that just as people about us are in many ways reactionary and prejudiced we must be prejudiced and reactionary.

THERE are those who say that this kind of thinking is bad. It may lead to the weakening of self-confidence.

So it may.

But most of us need to have our self-confidence weak-

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ened. For, as a rule, self-confidence is over-confidence, and over-confidence leads us to see ourselves out of proportion. It makes us long to impose ourselves on others, to establish our opinions simply and solely because the opinions are ours.

It is only when we have taken our properly modest little place in the universe that we can put our opinions where they belong.

Then we shall express ourselves with less emphasis. Then we shall listen with more respect to the opinions of others.

Incidentally, we shan't be without reward, for we shall discover that the old emphasis actually got in the way of our opinions. It made it, not easier, but harder, for our opinions to be accepted by others. It introduced noise as a diversion, and all the vanity and egotism that go with noisy assurance, throwing up the wall of resentment.

Moreover, the new method will tend to make those others less self-assertive, for it will make the others more ready to receive, more sympathetic.

Where there is apparent loss, there will be real gain.

## THE READING OF FICTION

**S**HORTLY before death Charles A. Dana was listening to the complaints of an old friend about the dullness of human existence. "The trouble with you is that you don't read novels," said Mr. Dana. "So you miss one of the greatest pleasures in life." Then he went on to explain that no matter how busy he might be, he spent a part of every day reading fiction.

THE ADVICE seems strange, especially as it was given to a man and to an American at that, doubtless sharing the American man's prejudice against fiction reading. For, fiction-devouring nation as we are, we are inclined to look upon the time spent on stories as wasted. Besides most of such reading is done by women, who, we consider, have plenty of time to waste. Now our attitude in this matter is typical of our attitude toward nearly all the amusements of the mind. So great is our contempt for them that we never stop to think of acquiring them by cultivation. The idea of any man's deliberately following Mr. Dana's suggestion and systematically reading stories seems almost preposterous.

BUT is the idea preposterous? If Mr. Dana found enjoyment and refreshment in novels, he was, of course, sensible to read them. But suppose a man has no interest in them. Ought he to try to cultivate such an interest? The answer would depend on the qualities of the man. If he had no other intellectual resources, novel-reading might be serviceable. There are people who need to be taken out of themselves for at least a few minutes each day and to have their imaginations quickened. Indeed, we all suffer from the limitations of our natures. "I can

sympathize with anything in the world that I could experience myself," proudly exclaimed a clever, but censorious, literary critic one day. "But you ought to be able to sympathize with anything you couldn't experience," exclaimed a friend.

MANY of us are shut up in the little prison of self. We are ill at ease and unhappy largely because we cannot escape. It is only the cultivation of the imagination that can give us freedom. Sympathy with the happiness of others, even though merely characters in books, will cheer us. Sympathy with characters as unfortunate as we are or more unfortunate will make us realize in periods of depression that "we are not all alone unhappy" and will put us in better conceit with ourselves. It is by getting away from ourselves that we are enabled to keep our proper relation with the rest of the world.

BUT THIS view demands on the part of the fiction-makers exceptional skill. There is, besides, the pleasure that comes from mere amusement, which is so precious to mankind but never sufficiently appreciated. How often do we see readers, after a few hours of complete absorption in a story, throw it aside with a contemptuous remark or shrug of the shoulders. For the relief from care it has given them, for the delight, they seem to feel no gratitude. It is this state of mind that made Jane Austen, in one of her novels, break out in resentful indignation, and that makes authors of the present day furious when people declare of work achieved with travail of the soul, "Oh, yes, I read that little story. It was very pretty." If people knew of the efforts put forth by those who successfully entertain them, they would probably have a greater appreciation of the results. "Let us attend to the serious business of writing a comedy," says Triplet in Charles Reade's play of "Masks and Faces." From long experience Charles

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Reade knew of the bitter price the artist had to pay for being an entertainer.

NOW MR. DANA was an exception to most fiction readers; he recognized the joys of the imagination as among those conferring the greatest happiness human beings could have and he systematically cultivated them. He had too many intellectual interests, and he was too wholesome-minded a man to allow fiction reading to become a vice. He did not read as many American women are said to do, a novel a day. That, at the end of his life, he could still enjoy fiction, shows he never abused such reading. He read a multitude of other things. So he escaped from the intellectual and moral nausea that often comes from the persistent perusal of romances. In other words, he was temperate. For, in fiction reading as in all other pleasures, there is danger in over-indulgence.

FROM the pulpits the old-fashioned preachers used to denounce novels and novel reading. According to their point of view they were right. Most novels of fifty years ago gave false views of life and, in the case of young people, they led to moral and intellectual flabbiness. Similar charges could be made today. For young people indiscriminate novel reading is dangerous. Herbert Spencer was opposed to free public libraries on the ground that they would inevitably deteriorate into purveyors of cheap fiction among school children. But Mr. Dana's advice was not for youth; it was for those who had passed youth and it applied to all the experienced, the care-laden, to those who, without losing their mental balance, could let the imagination have play and could apply to what they read standards of judgment that came from their own living. It is amusing in this connection to hear that some of our nerve specialists are giving their patients courses in novel reading. As a people we must indeed be nerve-

#### THE READING OF FICTION

sick when we have to have one of the most easily accessible forms of diversion prescribed for us.

The ideal method of enjoying fiction, however, is to take it seriously. Then it gives a double pleasure, through appealing both to the imagination and to the intellect. The reader is not merely interested and entertained. He is an active worker, delighting in his task. In a sense he becomes a collaborator, verifying, denying, criticising, and finally emerging after refreshment that leaves his fancy and his wits in better condition than they were before. If we have not learned to read fiction in this way, we do not really know the high art of getting from fiction its best rewards.



## SEEING

SEVERAL years ago, in midwinter, I crossed the Atlantic. Our company was small, about a dozen people. So we soon became acquainted. In spite of the season, the weather proved to be mild, and there was a pretty regular attendance at table.

When we had been out a few days it seemed to me that our ship was a little world by itself.

The passengers and the ship's officers and men represented society.

Our world was rolling about, not in space, but on the blue sea.

Those of us who were passengers were sharing virtually the same experiences.

It interested me to see how differently we were affected.

THERE was one man who seemed to enjoy everything. For every passenger on the boat he had a good word. And he spoke well of the courtesy of the officers, of the arrangement and care of the cabins, of the quality of the food. He walked among us like a radiant presence. Whenever he appeared people would brighten up.

There was another man of about the same age, who complained all the time. He had his cabin changed and then insisted on being provided with another mattress. He criticized the management of the ship, the food, the passengers, the weather, in fact, nearly everything in sight. His whole day seemed to be spent in painful reactions. He was generally disliked and frequently snubbed. Wherever he went he made a depressing effect.

THEN there was a woman on board who did everything hard. In walking about she was continually bumping into something and getting hurt. Or she would go sprawling

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on the deck through her inability to pilot herself. She would reach the table only by a series of frantic rushes. Her efforts would leave her in a state of great dishevelment and exhaustion. She kept, nevertheless, in a state of fairly good humor. But each day of her life on that ship consisted of a long series of battles in which she was more or less damaged. At night when she went to her cabin she was a wreck.

These three passengers interested me particularly. They strikingly illustrated how differently people could be affected by the same things.

Now why should they be affected so differently by the same things?

ON THE ship I used to hear the passengers speak of our little world as if it were something wholly outside themselves. They would pass judgment on it, kind and severe, as if the qualities they noted lay wholly in the things.

They did not seem to realize that those qualities were in any way influenced by themselves.

And yet that week on board ship made me see very plainly there was really no such thing as qualities wholly outside oneself. The qualities were mainly in ourselves. Impressions which came apparently from without, actually came, for the most part, from within.

If such were not the truth how could these three people on board ship with me have been so differently affected by the same things?

IMPRESSION is, after all, largely an illusion. What is real lies in our minds and in our hearts.

And this reality we can make beautiful or ugly accordingly to the attitude we take toward the rest of the world.

Haven't you ever noticed how some things seen at a certain angle seem hideous, and how the same things seen at another angle seem beautiful?

## SEEING

If we take toward the world an attitude of hostility we are sure to see the world at a wrong angle. It becomes ugly. It creates in us ugly, even painful feelings.

If we are resentful, we are sure to suffer and to find more and more things to resent.

But if we take toward the world a tolerant and generous attitude, there results an amazing difference. The world becomes beautiful. People grow interesting and kind. Life takes on new zest.

Why aren't most of us wise enough to act on this truth of every-day experience?

Why do we choose to take toward the world the attitude that creates unhappiness in ourselves instead of the attitude that creates happiness?

## VALUES

**V**ALUES are curious things. They seem so simple. And yet the more one thinks about them the more complicated they grow. One discovers that they create a vast system, bewildering, like a maze.

This maze is usually called economics.

OF ALL the studies now pursued by men, there is not one more important than economics. Perhaps you will say that religion is more important, for the reason that it relates not only to life in this world, but to life in the next world as well. And yet, I believe it may be shown that economics relates both to the present and to the future life. For unless we learn to live wisely here how can we be ready to live wisely in the world beyond, where the conditions may be even more complicated?

We have a way of assuming that if we are only good here the future life will be very simple for us, and prosperous and happy.

Is it not possible that in this assumption we are following the instinct that makes us think when we are disappointed in one place we should be very much more contented if we could move to some other place?

WHATEVER may be the truth, I am convinced that for most of us there can be no real happiness, no wholesome living, no moral growth, until we learn to understand values.

You must strive to understand and I must strive to understand. We must think about values every day and about the relation of values to our living, to our thinking, to the springs of character.

It is by letting ourselves become so mixed in regard

## VALUES

to values that we have made such a mess of our way of living.

If we understood values and strove resolutely and generously to sustain values in their right relations we should not see poverty blighting the earth, creating the slums in the great cities, developing suffering and disease and crime, and crippling millions of human beings in body and mind and soul.

WHERE do values really begin?

To find an answer we must go back to the creation of the world and to the experience of the first human beings on its surface.

There are those who say that human beings were deliberately placed here by God, first by the creation of Adam, then by the removal of a rib from Adam's body and the development of the rib into a woman, Eve, and then by the coming of Adam and Eve's offspring.

There are others who say that human beings were evolved from creatures of the sea.

There are multitudes of other theories, including the unattractive and yet popular belief that we evolved to our present state from a period when we lived as monkeys.

Perhaps it was during the monkey stage, or some such stage corresponding to the monkey stage, that the creatures destined to become human beings began to have intimations regarding the existence of values.

We know from observation that all animals have such intimations. Some of them have exceedingly keen ideas about values.

And from these ideas about values in animals we can trace strong feelings in regard to rights. How often we look on while animals defend what they consider their possessions. Sometimes they fight as furiously as human beings.

## VALUES

HOW INTERESTING it would be to know the precise moment and the precise conditions when a man said of a thing, "This thing is property and it is mine."

It would be worth while knowing why he said such words, and on what considerations he based his claims.

And of the greatest interest would be his reasons for possessing himself of that piece of property and declaring that his right to it shut out the rights of the rest of the world.

PERHAPS, on the other hand, at that early time, the rights of the rest of the world were not considered at all. The most powerful of all human instincts must have been the instinct that the race has maintained itself by, self-preservation.

Perhaps it did not enter the consciousness of the first human beings that any human beings should be considered except themselves. Perhaps each instinctively fought for himself.

And perhaps the realization that the earth was a common heritage, that it would be preposterous for any man or any group of men to claim it all, or to claim a large share of it, was an idea that could come only after many generations of training.

VERY soon after the creatures destined to become human developed the sense of values, this sense must have played a great part in their growth. It must have led to all kinds of complications.

The moment we meet human beings in history we find them at full tilt, attacking one another, all on account of values.

And history consists very largely of records of these disturbances, sometimes veiled as righteous wars or wars for a principle, but always with values somewhere exerting a mighty influence.

Nowadays we know that there is no such thing as a war simply and solely for an ideal principle. We know that if we only look far enough we shall find values playing a part, concern for material advantage.

AT PRESENT we are going through a readjustment of our ideas of values. We are on the verge of a revolution, none the less significant because it does not necessarily involve bloodshed. This revolution is going to upset long established views regarding values. It is going to show us that many of the evils from which we have suffered result from our misconception of values.

Under the circumstances, surely it will pay us to think seriously about values, to study their meaning, to see how closely they are related to every minute in our lives, to every human relation that we sustain, to our security, our peace, our happiness, and to the welfare of the future generations.

Maybe we shall find that there are values relating directly to all of us, values that, when properly adjusted, will change the whole aspect of living.

We may even find that we own the earth and that property is of less value than humanity.

Then we shall look about for a way of coming into our inheritance.

## DANGEROUS WEAPONS

**T**HE LAW tries hard to protect us from danger. Here it is very ineffective, for we are never fully protected. There is no knowing what mischance may come, leading to tragedy.

It is something, of course, that men may not carry concealed weapons, capable in an instant of destroying human life. The law puts a check on a few reckless and dangerous men, a feeble check, however.

Is it really the law that gives society its best protection in this matter?

Does not such protection come from ourselves?

Would many of us choose to carry a dangerous weapon if the law permitted?

I don't think so.

We know that, for most of us, such weapons are unnecessary. We have really given them up of our own accord.

**T**HERE are dangerous weapons that the law pays no attention to.

Some of these are not considered dangerous. There are some, indeed, that are generally regarded as good. They are not even called weapons at all. And yet, since men began to think, they have been the cause of incessant discord.

They have caused quarrels and murder and wars.

They have torn apart acquaintances and friends and relatives.

They have broken up whole families.

They have plunged the world in contention.

Even now they are at work doing mischief wherever there is human life.



## DANGEROUS WEAPONS

I KNOW a man who, a few years ago, became disturbed in his religious beliefs. He had been brought up very strictly by a religious mother. He had married a religious woman.

Finally, he decided that he must change his religion. He must profess a religion that had been abhorrent to his mother, that was abhorrent to his wife.

When he told his wife she was broken-hearted. He explained that he must do his duty as he saw it. But she was not convinced. She thought he ought to do his duty as she saw it.

He loved his wife and he knew that his wife loved him. But he followed what he believed to be his duty. His wife tormented him. Where there had once been peace there was argument, that is, on her side. The man had sense enough not to argue against feeling so deep-seated.

Soon he found that his domestic happiness was destroyed.

They still live together, those two.

But each day a deadly weapon beats on them, the weapon of discord.

THERE is a new philosophy at work in the world. It is very noble and beautiful. It promises all human beings a share in the heritage of life, not merely a chance to work, to earn daily bread, but a chance to develop all the resources of the body and the mind and the soul.

Vast numbers of people the world over are accepting it.

One would think that faith in it would make people generous and inspiring.

In many instances such is the result. Some of the most beautiful and lovable characters I know profess the new faith.

But others have allowed the faith to turn them into infuriated zealots. They speak as, I imagine, the religious zealots of the middle ages used to speak, when they

## DANGEROUS WEAPONS

denounced those who disagreed with them and rejoiced over the burning of their fellow-creatures at the stake.

They speak of brotherhood as if it were a corporation. They admit only those they regard as favored, the women and men that agree with them.

Their other brothers they condemn and cast out.

WHENEVER I hear people strongly expressing their opinions I am impressed by one quality behind them all, the belief in the truth of their opinions, the justice, the good.

It is plain that they all think their opinions, if accepted, would work to the advantage of mankind.

And it is this belief that seems to give them such vigor.

As a rule, the stronger the belief the more vigorous is the expression, the more dangerous the weapon, the more deadly.

The enthusiasts go as far as they can, as far as they dare.

If the opinions hurled at us could kill the body most of us would have been dead long ago.

They often do kill, however. They kill the good-will that ought to exist among human beings, the sympathy and the understanding.

THERE is nothing in the world that can compare with strongly asserted opinions for destroying understanding and sympathy.

Observe a group of enthusiasts holding different opinions. Five minutes after their talk begins they are out of sympathy and in a morass of misunderstanding.

And as they founder they are furious with one another.

Nevertheless each believes he is in the right, that his opinion, if accepted, will do the world good.

WHAT shall we do with those deadly weapons, these violent opinions?

Shall we make a law against them?

## DANGEROUS WEAPONS

Why add one more to our laws? We have laws enough, too many.

The best laws, as we have seen in the matter of carrying deadly weapons, come from the hearts of men.

If we really felt that we needed to carry deadly weapons, all the laws in the world would not keep us from carrying them.

And from history we know that laws can't keep down opinions. They have been tried. Under them the opinions have gained in vigor and they have spread.

THE ONLY way for us is to recognize the madness of using our opinions on one another to destroy harmony, which is the expression of understanding and sympathy. When once we recognize it we shall become sane.

We shall see that opinions are of very little account, save as they do mischief.

They have done more than anything else in the world to keep us back from our goal.

For our goal is harmony. When once we have established harmony among us the spirit of understanding and sympathy will flow through the race.

Then we shall become one. We shall be a healthy organization.

## SMILING

**A** PROFESSOR in one of the Eastern colleges once told me of a nervous breakdown that he had experienced some time before.

"How did you get over it?" I asked.

He smiled rather sheepishly, as if half ashamed to tell. "I went to several of the nerve specialists," he said, "and I didn't succeed in getting any help. Then by chance I heard of a woman, not a physician, who had studied nervous diseases for years and had been very successful in treating them. Some friends persuaded me to go and see her. She pulled me through by teaching me how to take care of my thoughts and feelings."

"How did she do it?"

Again that shame-faced look appeared on the professor's face. "She began by making me learn to smile," he said. "You see, I had got down to such depths that I couldn't smile. It seemed as if I had lost all power over the muscles of my face. They had become set. They not only expressed the depression that I felt, but they actually added to it."

"Well," I said, "after losing the power to smile, how did you acquire it again?"

"I simply obeyed instructions. I went home and for half an hour I stood before the mirror and I practiced smiling. At first I had a hard time twisting my mouth into a smile. In spite of myself, the muscles would sag. Then I saw that the muscles were actually fighting against me. I kept on trying and at the end of half an hour I succeeded in making a pretty good imitation of a smile. That exercise I continued for several days till I had overcome the rigidity of those facial muscles and learned to control them. After a time I found I could

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smile almost at will. When I began to be depressed I would smile. At the same time I would resist the depressing thoughts. The combination of the resisting and the smiling would save me from falling into depression."

THAT hard-headed and wholesome philosopher, William James, has expressed the same principle: "When you feel depressed, smile."

It sounds easy. But in most cases it requires strong will, developed by practice. For there are comparatively few of us gifted with natures so sunny that we are continually tempted to smile.

I KNOW a man who married a girl that used to be considered very disagreeable. It was predicted by those who knew the girl well that he would regret his marriage. But they didn't appreciate the man. They didn't appreciate his capacity for smiling.

I have myself witnessed little incidents where that capacity worked marvelously on that wife. I have seen her, in the presence of her husband, speak and act in a way that would make many husbands furious. But this husband would smile good-humoredly and the wife's ill feeling would evaporate. It would be as if the ill feeling had never been.

Those two people have now been married for a good many years. Long ago I noticed that the wife had ceased to be disagreeable in the presence of her husband. From his habit of smiling her ill feeling had become discouraged. It changed to good feeling.

IF THAT husband's smile had not been sincere, if it had concealed or subtly conveyed ill feeling, it would, of course, have worked very differently. It would have irritated that wife almost beyond endurance. It would have

## SMILING

developed the ill feeling in her and made her, perhaps, unendurable.

For smiling, to do good, either to those who smile or to those who look on, must convey kindly feeling.

There are those whose smiles are almost terrifying. They can express many kinds of ill feeling, including dislike, resentment, suspicion, cruelty.

Then there are smiles that are puzzling, that sometimes create uneasiness. These smiles are often called "enigmatical." The smile on the face of the Mona Lisa is of this kind. It makes some people uncomfortable.

And we all know the truth of Shakespeare's saying that a man may smile and smile and be a villain still. And yet we all believe that this kind of smiling is sure to betray itself. In it there can't be anything wholesome, anything that would help to uplift the spirit.

WE HUMAN beings are very proud of being the only animals that can smile. And yet we don't show a very proper appreciation of our gift. Though we may realize its magical qualities, we often fail at the critical moment to use them. For example, we may know that when we have to choose between smiling and frowning the consequences will greatly affect our own peace of mind. If we frown we shall be further involved in trouble. If we smile we may obviate the trouble.

And yet, as a rule, under such circumstances, most of us choose to frown.

We ought to imitate that nervous professor and learn smiling as an art. Habit will make it second nature.

## FEAR OF POVERTY

**O**NE DAY I was talking with a very successful man. He was discussing his career, after the habit of so many successful men. In his career he took pardonable pride. But at the end he made an astonishing remark: "I suppose I am what people call a very rich man. As a boy, although I expected to conquer the world, I never thought I should be so rich as I am now. And yet there isn't one day in my life when I am free from the terror of poverty. There's not one day in my life when I'm free from the thought that, in my old age, I may land in the poorhouse."

ANOTHER man, established as a dramatist, with a fortune invested in real estate that increases in value every year, once said to me: "Sometimes I wake up in the night and I think of what may happen to my wife and children in case I lose my money or become incapacitated and let it slip away, or in case after my death it is taken away from them. Perspiration breaks out all over my body and I lie there in agony."

I looked at him in surprise.

Was it possible, I thought, that he had become ill?

Had his intellectual activities injured his mind?

Or was he merely suffering from one of the penalties of success?

Now I know what he was suffering from, a disease that nearly every one in the world suffers from, nearly every one who thinks seriously about life.

It is said that Mark Twain, perhaps the greatest humorist the world has ever known, was tormented by the fear of dying in poverty. With his friends he would discuss this obsession. Sometimes he would weep.

## FEAR OF POVERTY

His humor could not save him from this weakness. The best it could do was to make him forget it for a time. But to it his mind was always returning.

Mark Twain died rich. But before he died rich he had died poor a million times.

YEARS ago, in New York, I used to know a very clever young fellow who followed the rather precarious profession of acting. He once told me that the sight of his brother actors out of work distressed him greatly. "I'm always putting myself in their place," he said. "I'm always dreading that the time will come when I shall walk the streets, broke."

For several years I saw nothing of him. But I heard of him occasionally, playing small parts here and there. Finally he became well known through appearing in an important part in a successful play.

While this success was going on I happened to meet him. He was handsomely dressed and he seemed happy. We had a chat about old times.

"Do you remember how I used to tell you about being afraid of going broke?" he asked. When I replied that I did remember he began to laugh uproariously. "Well, I did go broke. I walked up Fifth Avenue one night with just nine cents in my pocket. Then I said to myself, 'It has come at last!' And I leaned against a tree and I laughed and laughed."

"Why did you laugh?" I said.

"I laughed because I'd actually succeeded in laying that ghost. I found that being broke wasn't such a terrible thing after all."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"It was during the summer and I decided to try to get a job as a waiter in a summer resort. I went to an agency and offered my services. They gave me enough money to take me down to a little hotel on the Jersey coast.



#### FEAR OF POVERTY

There I waited on table for two weeks. At the end of that time they found out that I was an actor and they appointed me the social entertainer of the place. I used to get acquainted with the guests and try to make them limber up and be social. I also managed the little parties. At the end of the season I'd saved up a little money, enough to keep me till I got an engagement to go on the road again."

"Well," I said, "that experience must have been worth while."

"Worth while!" he fairly shouted. "It has relieved me of one of the worst burdens I have ever known. It made a man of me. Now I don't care what happens. I've been down to rock bottom."

He threw out his chest and walked gaily up the street.

I suppose that many passers-by, seeing him in his fashionable clothes, regarded him as a social butterfly.

But I knew better.

## ADJUSTMENT TO LIFE

**I**N NEW YORK a dozen years ago I met a young fellow who was gradually making his way in the business world. He lived frugally on a very small salary; and yet he seemed to enjoy life. He had the happy faculty of taking things as they came.

Suddenly, to his amazement, he inherited a fortune. A relative he was not on very good terms with died without leaving a will. He found himself with ten thousand dollars a year.

At once he changed his mode of living. He moved into a handsome apartment. He joined several clubs. He fell into the way of taking most of his meals at fashionable restaurants.

One day I received an invitation to dine with him. We met at Sherry's and we had what seemed to me a delicious dinner.

But my friend was not pleased. On every dish that appeared he turned a critical eye.

Nothing was exactly to his taste. And during the meal he made comments showing that, in regard to many other things in life, he had developed a similarly keen faculty for criticism.

Then I saw that his wealth had taught him to make exactions. It had established standards for other people in their relation to him, standards that other people found it hard to live up to, or, perhaps, would refuse to live up to.

His inheritance, instead of doing him good, had done him harm, had weakened his power to enjoy.

It had led him to make a false adjustment to life.

I COULDN'T help contrasting that man with another man of my acquaintance. He is prosperous, too.

But he is also wise.

He knows the folly of making exactions, of setting up difficult standards for others.

Ever since I have known him he has been tolerant, considerate, patient. I suspect that he is one of those people whose characters are naturally placed right.

But about that I can't be sure.

And my reason for not being sure is that he is so methodical, so careful in his adjustment to life. His method and character suggest that his adjustment may be wholly the result of thought. On the other hand, his capacity for wise thinking may be one of the methods of nature which have helped to place his character right.

Nothing apparently disturbs him. If the food, that, according to most people ought to be hot, comes on the table cold, he smiles and says: "I don't mind its being cold. I like it just as much as if it were hot."

He probably misses many of the delights of the epicure. But he gains far more than he loses.

The same spirit he turns on all the little vexations of life. He meets them with a smile.

And the practice of meeting the little vexations has given him extraordinary power in dealing with the great.

FOR MOST exacting people each day is a continual battle. Everything goes wrong with them. They complain; they fuss. They consider themselves injured, imposed upon.

They never realize that the trials they meet are the trials that all human beings have to meet. They seem to be unaware that there is a quality in them which contributes to their uneasiness.

They forget that life is wholly a matter of adjustment.

## THE THINGS UNSEEN

**D**URING a visit in Paris some time ago Thomas A. Edison was interviewed. He made a disparaging remark about the triumphal arch, generally known as the Arc de Triomphe.

If you have been in Paris you must remember very clearly that arch. And if you have not been in Paris, you doubtless know the arch from photographs.

There it stands at the head of one of the most magnificent avenues in the world, the Champs Elysees. As you go up the avenue, hardly steep enough to be called a hill and yet steep enough to give the effect of a decided rise, you face the arch, nobly imagined, finely proportioned, a rare example of genius in conception and in design.

ONCE, with an American lady, just arrived in Paris for the first time, I went up the avenue and under the arch. At sight of the arch she was thrilled. "Oh, how good not to be disappointed!" she said. "It is ever so much more beautiful than I thought it could possibly be."

Nevertheless, so great a man as Edison, a genius, keenly alive to the work of other geniuses, was disappointed. And the reason was that while he was looking at that arch, he saw another arch, made of the bones of the soldiers Napoleon had sacrificed.

When I heard of Edison's disappointment, I wondered which of the two arches was the real arch, the arch of stone or the arch of bone.

SO OFTEN the things that seem real are the most unreal of all things. As a matter of fact, when we think that we see things clearly, we often see very imperfectly or we see not at all.

## THE THINGS UNSEEN

For, as the religious people say, the highest reality is the reality of the things unseen.

Observe, for example, one of the richest men of the world, as he goes through his day. From the moment he wakes in the morning till he goes to sleep, he is surrounded with servility and honor.

People think that they are honoring the man. They are doing nothing of the kind. They are honoring his possessions. It is to these they are servile.

And how does the man feel?

Very naturally he feels that these people are servile to him and are paying him honor. He is his own Arc de Triomphe. He prides himself on being self-made. He also prides himself on his millions. He doesn't stop to consider that his millions have been made, not merely of bones, like the Napoleonic Arch, but of the living flesh and blood of those who, underpaid, ill-clad, contributed to his profits.

If we could see this particular millionaire just as he is, if we could see how he has preyed on the hundreds of his fellow-creatures, what a sight he would be, what a monstrosity!

And what ghosts we should find hovering about him, the ghosts of those who suffered through him and his kind, the mentally and the morally slain.

WALK about in a prosperous city. Observe how fine the buildings are, how clean the streets, how well dressed and eager the people as they dart here and there.

Surely there is prosperity here, and happiness.

Here is one of the most blessed cities in the world.

We may pride ourselves on having good eyes. Yet our eyes may deceive us. They are telling us only part of the truth. And you know just as well as I do, part of the truth can be more deceitful and more misleading than an out-and-out lie.

## THE THINGS UNSEEN

For the prosperity and the happiness that you see may hide a vast amount of squalor and misery.

Moreover, the prosperity and happiness are direct expressions of this squalor and misery. They have reached their highest beauty by making the squalid misery more miserably squalid.

Here is the expression of unfair competition, the strong preying on the weak, because the weak are helpless.

IT IS VERY unpleasant to fall into the habit of seeing things, of really seeing, of distinguishing between what is partly true or not true at all and what is wholly true.

For a time you may be amused by experimenting. Just try to think straight and to see clear. You'll discover how interesting the game is, how exciting.

But beware! If you keep at the game you will lose your peace of mind. You will be continually tormented. You will live in two worlds. And you will find yourself at odds with the world of affairs, with the particular world that we consider so important.

Perhaps the best way, surely the most comfortable way, is to take the attitude of the friend I have referred to, who was not disappointed in the Arc de Triomphe. Perhaps it is well for our serenity that we can't all be Edisons, with the power to light up the world, even the world of the unseen.

But if, even at the cost of our serenity, we wish to see the whole truth, we shall see all that the friend saw and all that Edison saw.

We shall miss neither the seen nor the unseen.

Then and then only shall we understand the meaning of things and acquire balance and judgment.

## TRUTH

**T**HE more I think of truth the more dangerous it seems.

And yet there are people who love it. Though they must see the mischief it has done in the world they consider their attitude creditable. Often they boast of it as they might of any great and noble passion.

And how they use truth to smite one another!

ONE SELDOM hears nowadays of street-fights. In this particular humanity has progressed.

But other fights go on indoors, in the mansions of the rich, in the hovels of the poor, in the simple homes of those neither rich nor poor, the blessed ones.

They go on to a shocking extent where intelligence dwells.

Often I have been present at such scenes. No missiles are thrown. There is no blood. But I know that feelings are lacerated. Dreadful wounds are made and some of the scars will never heal. In the hearts of those about us, as well as in our own hearts, there is bitterness that works like poison.

All because of truth, this endless struggle for truth!

I SOMETIMES wish that truth never existed.

At other times I wish that it might be captured and destroyed or that it might be consigned to very kind treatment on an island in the Pacific.

You see, I don't exactly hate it. But I believe the time has come when the mischief it does ought to be stopped.

However, you can't kill it.

And it might escape from the island as Napoleon escaped from Elba.

Then the world would fall to quarreling over it again,

## TRUTH

maybe with more violence after the interval of peace and recuperation.

YOU MAY say that if people really had the truth they would love it and submit to it reverently, adoringly, like a lover to his mistress.

But already they think they have it. And their love, instead of making them submissive, instead of giving them beautiful humility, becomes a fury.

It is because they think they have it that they go mad.

When, in the middle ages, the religious zealots got to burning one another in the interest of truth, the marvel is that people didn't wake up.

It would seem as if some of them must have said: "Truth has done mischief enough in the world. It is time that it be properly punished."

But no such thing took place.

So far as I have been able to discover not one word was said against truth.

Error was a constant object of pursuit. Laws were made against it. Punishments were inflicted.

But truth escaped. It towered above the world in its pride, its self-assertion, its tyranny, like a mighty citadel.

I USED occasionally to meet a woman who had charge of an institution for social betterment.

She had a passion for truth. It was like a hideous form of sensuality. It used to commit her to dreadful excesses.

One day she involved herself in a scene of violence. I happened to see her shortly afterward. She was like a warrior after a battle, exhausted, on the verge of collapse.

I asked her why she had followed her course of action. With a sudden access of energy and in a loud voice she made that most pitiful of all replies: "Because I was in the right!"

Her conviction that she was always in the right



## TRUTH

and her fierce championship of what she believed to be truth finally led to an investigation.

It resulted in her removal.

I KNOW a man who has attained marvelous peace of mind. Nothing seems to trouble him. He wears his burdens lightly, like a loose, well-fitting suit. He is never in a hurry, never flustered. He has time even to listen to the troubles of others.

Advice he never volunteers. But if he is asked for it, he gives it somewhat hesitatingly, always tentatively, as a thing of uncertain value.

It is odd that many people like to talk their problems over with him.

I once asked him if he could explain to me the secret of his power.

He smiled.

After an interval, he said: "I think it may be that I long ago gave up believing that two and two made four."

"Don't you believe that two and two do make four?" I said.

"Maybe," he whimsically replied.

I HAVE never been able to reconcile with Ralph Waldo Emerson a story they tell.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Emerson went among his neighbors in Concord, rejoicing. He felt that a noble impulse was animating the country and leading it to heroic expression.

So it was.

But it was doing other things, too—bringing horrors.

This condition Emerson chose not to take into account.

For Emerson the strife stood for truth.

But like many other advocates of war, he favored strife sustained at a remote distance by others, his brothers in

## TRUTH

the flesh. Meanwhile he stayed in his beautiful Concord, where he could see only the pretty aspects of war, the eager young fellows marching in their handsome uniforms, their sweethearts waving them on with handkerchiefs to death and to maiming and to the slaughter of their fellow-countrymen whose zeal was exactly like their own.

When Emerson used to see Bronson Alcott, animated with the passion of truth and bursting with vociferous argument, coming up the front path, he would jump out of the back window.

However Emerson might conceive the truth as strife for others, he conceived it for himself as peace, the right to think his own thoughts without warfare.

THERE is a great deal in that idea about truth for oneself.

If one could only keep truth for oneself and to oneself!

But those who get it for themselves long to impose it on others. And the stronger their love the greater is their longing to impose.

IF WE think we have found truth for ourselves, above all things, let us not impose it on one another.

Let us lock upon it all the doors of consciousness.

For however inspiring it may be to us, however ennobling, when once we try to impose it on another it becomes a poison.

It poisons ourselves.

It poisons the others.

See how it works. The very instant, in the most secret recesses of the mind, we desire to impose it on others, the poison is engendered.

Surely you must have felt it working. It is almost as if truth said: "Be careful. If you spoil me I will no longer be a blessing. I will be a curse."

## TRUTH

WHY do we so seldom heed this warning?

Why in the name of truth do we rush so madly into strife? Why do we act as if we could not wait for misery to come to us, as if we must pursue it like eager children and clasp it to ourselves?

Isn't it because we don't understand this strange thing, truth, because we don't know that unless we master it and destroy the self-indulgent regard for it in our hearts it will destroy us?

So, for this reason, I am in favor of an agitation against it, of a concerted movement against it.

But the movement must be peaceful. It must express itself through an agreement, that each of us shall drive out what we believe to be the truth in himself.

BUT AS I write I hear a cry of protest.

It makes me realize how precious truth is to every one in the world, his own special truth.

That special truth is in conflict with all the other truth it doesn't happen to coincide with.

So long as it is kept in the heart, where it belongs, it is like a little garden.

When we think of it as a little garden, how it changes its aspect!

Everything seems different out of its own environment, out of its sphere.

Then let each keep his little garden, provided that he keep it in his heart.

But, on penalty of death, let him not interfere with any other little garden. Let him not trample in that sacred place, where the love of truth flowers, creating beauty in the humblest, the lowliest.

So LET us tread softly. Let each of us love and cherish, not only his own garden, but the gardens of the others.

Perhaps we shall find that in this way the garden of each of us will grow even more beautiful.

## TRUTH

THE WHOLE world will bloom with gardens.

Is it not possible that here lies one of the secrets of life?

But let us not be too sure.

Let us plant this secret in the garden of the heart.

If it is a true thing, if it really belongs in the heart, it will burst into bloom.

## PERQUISITES

**A**N ECCENTRIC man made a peculiar complaint to a group of friends in a house where I happened to be calling.

"Every morning," he said, "as I walk down-town, I have occasion to pass a building in process of construction. In front of the building is a narrow board-walk. Only one person can pass on it. Often as I cross I meet workmen coming from the opposite direction. Involuntarily, when they see me approaching, they step off and leave the board-walk to me. Now they do that, of course," he resentfully concluded, "simply and solely because I am better dressed than they are."

We all listened with some interest and amusement, but in silence.

Finally one of the group spoke up. "Don't you know that that little experience of yours is one of the perquisites of the prosperous?"

"PERQUISITES of the prosperous!"

I was struck with the phrase. I began to think about its meaning.

The next day I had an illustration.

I went into the office of a man who owned a large office building. Several people were waiting, among them a poorly dressed woman, who looked as if she might be a servant. I overheard a bit of talk between this woman and another woman sitting beside her.

"I've been sitting here for over three hours," she said, "since nine o'clock. He sent for me to come yesterday and I waited all the afternoon. And then he went away without saying a word. They said he had to catch a train for the country."

## PERQUISITES

She sighed deeply and she rested her hands on her lap with the characteristic humility of the poor.

From further scraps of her talk I gathered that she was a scrub-woman in search of work that had been promised her.

Presently a portly, important-looking man entered. He asked authoritatively for the man the scrub-woman was waiting to see. In a moment he was ushered into the private office.

The scrub-woman looked on with mild interest. She did not seem resentful.

"Ah," I thought, "she recognizes the right of that fellow to the perquisites of the prosperous."

And as I sat there I racked my brain to find the exact opposite of the word "perquisites."

I couldn't find a word close enough to satisfy me.

But the thing the word would stand for if there were such a word—I recognized that plainly enough.

I SPECULATED about that scrub-woman's time. Those hours spent in waiting she might have used with profit, perhaps in work at home, perhaps in needed rest.

How about the time taken from her? Would it be included among the perquisites of the prosperous?

It surely would be included among the tributes that the prosperous exact from the poor.

THE DEFERENCE paid to the prosperous is so generally recognized that many people struggle to keep up the appearance of being prosperous.

They will make heavy sacrifices in order that they may wear good clothes. This fact alone goes far to explain why, throughout the civilized world, the standard of dress is so high. Among those who strive for success there are comparatively few who dare be careless about dress. "It's a great thing," says an American philosopher, "to feel

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that you've reached the point of recognized prosperity where it doesn't make any difference what kind of clothes you wear."

Observe the deference to dress that is paid everywhere around you, up to the mere suggestion of prosperity.

Do you ever read the society columns of the great newspapers of the country? You will find there lists of women whose distinction it is that on this occasion or that they were "well-gowned."

Fancy being able to attain in life this distinction!

And yet it is a distinction that wins some of the richest perquisites of the prosperous!

I have heard women say, clever women, too, that there was nothing in the world that could give a woman such strength as the feeling that she was well-dressed.

Men don't say exactly the same thing. But they act on the principle behind the saying.

ONE OF the greatest perquisites of the prosperous is their not having to pay their bills promptly.

Here they enjoy a great advantage over the poor.

If they are known to be very prosperous they may let the bills run on for years.

It is notorious that very rich people are often the hardest to collect from.

BY BUYING in large quantities the prosperous secure also fine rebates.

These are among their richest perquisites.

Now there are some kinds of rebate that are considered scandalous, even illegal, railroad rebates, for example.

And yet in the daily lives of the prosperous, rebates are regarded as not only just, but highly creditable, things to be encouraged.

The poor, in nearly all cases, have to pay cash. And,

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naturally, they have to buy in small quantities, which in itself is an extravagance.

In fact, there is no extravagance so great as being poor.

No wonder people struggle not to seem poor. They know that by seeming poor they will be subjected to the same exactions as the recognized poor. They will have to contribute to the tribute levied by the rich, to the perquisites of the prosperous. They are by no means inspired by vanity alone. They are wise enough to know that they can't afford to be included by the world among the poor.

IF THE poor have credit and don't pay promptly, their credit is stopped.

When it is a matter of rent, they are put on the street.

I have seen their furniture on the sidewalks, in the rain.

I RECENTLY had occasion to call on a clergyman.

As I entered his house he was ushering out an old man, poor, feeble, evidently in distress.

The clergyman spoke loudly, roughly. His words, however, showed that he was going to do the man a service.

As he turned to greet me, his manner changed. He smiled. His voice softened.

"You have to handle those fellows without gloves," he said, speaking to me as one speaks to an equal and drawing me into complicity.

We had never met before. He had never seen me nor heard of me. Like the feeble old man, I had come to ask the clergyman to do me a service.

But my clothes were as good as the clergyman's. They suggested prosperity. So the clergyman instinctively paid me one of the perquisites of the prosperous, one of the sweetest of all perquisites, courtesy.



## PERQUISITES

It **MUST** be hard not to receive this perquisite. It must be one of the hardest things in life, one of the most embittering.

Some of the prosperous like to say that the poor don't mind. The poor are so used to paying the tribute of respect and to failing to receive it.

I wonder if the prosperous really believe that notion.

Perhaps they only think they believe it.

And perhaps they think they believe it because they have said it so often and because they have heard one another say it.

But it isn't true.

**THE POOR** repeatedly show that they feel discourtesy.

As a matter of fact, they feel exactly as you do or as I do.

They show that they feel it by responding within as you do and as I do, both to discourtesy and to courtesy.

Only they may not show it in exactly the same way.

Often they don't dare to resent discourtesy. They are afraid of the punishment that will fall upon them if they show it, and upon their wives and children.

That is one awful thing about our way of living.

The prosperous can so easily punish not only the poor that offend them, but those who are dependent on the poor.

For in reality the poor have only one another to depend on.

They can rely only on one another.

I **KNOW** a well-to-do man in New York who suffers considerably from thinking about the perquisites of the prosperous.

It is unquestionably a painful subject. If you think steadily about it for a few minutes it will make you very uncomfortable.

Well, this man is an extremist, as people who resent our

social conditions are so likely to be. It's a pity, too, for their extravagant language weakens their influence.

This man is so prosperous that he refuses to wear good clothes.

In fact, he often looks shabby. His friends, in presenting him to their acquaintances, explain eagerly that he is rich.

Their apologies cause him to be considered much richer than he actually is, greatly to his annoyance, a circumstance not devoid of humor.

One day he went to call on some people who lived in a fashionable New York apartment hotel.

It was raining. He had no overcoat and his collar was turned up. He walked to the desk and asked that his name be sent to his friends.

The clerk shook his head and frowned. "Go to the servants' entrance," he said.

Now I SHOULD imagine this particular man would enjoy making his way up that entrance to his friends.

But you never can be sure what those social enthusiasts will do in such an emergency.

Besides at critical moments the sense of humor may become inhibited. Often it fails genuine humorists, just when they most need it, too.

This man was furious.

He blustered.

Naturally they thought he had been drinking.

They started to put him out.

By that time he was so incensed that he might have done something foolish.

But one of his friends happened along and rescued him.

It's A VERY unpleasant thing for those of us who enjoy the perquisites of the prosperous to have them suddenly suspended.

## PERQUISITES

But it's a wholesome experience, too, if one only looks at it in the right way.

It makes one realize how it must feel to have the perquisites suspended all the time.

## WASTE

**T**HERE is a passage in the Bible that troubles many practical people, where Mary Magdalene anoints the feet of Christ. They either forget the spirit that inspired the incident or they think it should have been expressed in a more practical way. The use of the ointment they regard as waste.

HENRY JAMES has written a story called "The Altar of the Dead." It is like a great symphony. And yet the theme is simple enough. It tells of a man, entering the shadows of life, who expresses his love for his dead friends by dedicating candles to them and keeping the candles lighted on an altar. As the years pass the lights make a great blaze.

I once gave the story to a lady, estimable in character and very practical. When she had read it she expressed disapproval.

"What a waste of money!" she said.

I RECENTLY heard of a great waste of effort, or rather what might be called waste.

At the time of the great earthquake in San Francisco a San Franciscan was in New York. In his bachelor quarters he had left most of his possessions, books, pictures and rugs of value as well as a trunk filled with clothes he had discarded and intended to give away. Just before leaving he had forgotten about the trunk.

On the morning of the fire his friend Jim said to himself: "Now there's Tom's things. I must see if I can't save them."

Jim managed to break through the lines. He made his way to Tom's apartment. He looked about, bewildered, unable to decide which of the things to take.

He noticed the trunk.

"Ah," he said, "that trunk probably holds the things Tom cares most about. He must have locked them up for safe-keeping."

Jim found some rope. He wound it around the trunk. Then he dragged the trunk downstairs and along the street, letting it run on its hinges.

He had decided to take it across the city, over the hills, to his house, three miles away.

He proceeded slowly and laboriously.

WHILE Jim was climbing one of the steepest of the hills he met a friend.

"What are you doing?" the friend asked.

Jim explained.

The friend said: "Well, I've got about a million things to do; but if that's Tom's trunk I guess I'll have to help you."

So he took hold of one of the ropes.

A half-hour later, when the two had made little progress, they met a man they both knew, driving a furniture wagon. He drew up and asked them where they were going.

When they told him they were taking Tom's trunk to a place of safety he said: "Well, I haven't any time to spare. I've got to take a lot of my own stuff out to the beach; but I can't leave Tom's trunk in the lurch. Put it in here and I'll drive it over."

JIM WROTE to Tom that he had saved the trunk.

Tom wrote back his thanks. He didn't explain till he returned. Then Jim showed him the trunk, safe and sound, and told the story in detail.

Tom laughed and laughed.

Then he sat on a chair and looked steadily at the trunk.

## WASTE

"Well, well," he said, "well, well."

With great rapidity he blinked his eyes.

THOSE stories are all one story, aren't they? They express the same idea, through different illustrations. That idea we all know about. We call it by different names. Some people call it the greatest thing in the world. Others call it the only thing. Still others say that without it life would not be worth living. It is the thing that gives to life its meaning and its beauty.

Can any expression of such a thing be called waste?

## SIN

**W**HEN I told a friend that I intended to write about the perquisites of sin he was shocked. "You surely aren't going to say anything that will make sin seem attractive, are you?" he said.

"Isn't sin in itself attractive?" I asked.

"Of course," he replied, with some uneasiness. "But still—"

He did not finish. He was, you see, expressing a feeling, none the less strong because it was vague and hard to convey in words.

WE ALL know that sin is attractive, some kinds to some people, other kinds to other people.

Its attractiveness explains why we are so afraid of it and why we so often take toward it what seems to me to be a false attitude.

This attitude we hear expressed in many ways. One of the commonest is the betrayal among good people of a certain envy of sinners.

It suggests that the good people think the sinners have acquired something they would themselves like to have, or something they are obliged to deny themselves by their refusal to sin.

The sinners know better.

They know that sin is not worth the return it brings.

They know that in itself it is a penalty without reference to the penalties it carries in its train.

In this knowledge there is a wonderful perquisite.

I KNOW a man who, according to our ways of thinking, would, if his life were generally known, be regarded as a great sinner. In his way he is a modern Don Juan. He

has often talked with me quite frankly about his experiences. Once I asked him, merely from curiosity, if he thought his way of living really paid.

He looked at me sharply, almost angrily. "Of course, it doesn't," he said.

In spite of his resentment I persisted in the inquiry. "Do you think it's better to go steady?" I asked.

"Certainly!" he repeated, hardly able to restrain his impatience at the absurdity of my question.

ANOTHER man of similar habits of life became seriously ill. His doctor told him that unless he completely changed his mode of living he would die within a few weeks. He sighed with relief. Then he said: "What a deliverance!"

He meant that through his weakness of character his vices had fastened themselves on him and enslaved him.

Only the threat of death could give him sufficient incentive to fight for his release.

It is the sinners who know from experience that sin is slavery.

And they know that in sin there is no peace and that in the gratification of sin there is disappointment and disillusion.

All these things the good people know from hearsay.

Many of these people don't really believe the reports. They are among the most abject of the earth. They look out on the sins of the world and they long to sin and they are prevented from sinning, not because they love goodness, but because they are afraid.

They are not afraid of evil. Far from it. In their hearts they love evil. They are afraid of certain consequences of evil, of punishment not directly related to the nature of evil, but forced into association with evil by public opinion.



## SIN

One of the perquisites of sin is that it teaches sinners the nature of evil. And by such teaching it reveals the beauty of goodness.

OFTEN in the hearts of sinners there is a deep love of goodness, fostered by the experience of sin. It may persist while the sinner goes on sinning.

Through sinning it may grow stronger and achieve a wonderful humility.

Haven't you noticed how genuinely attractive sinners often are?

When they are frank in their sinning, free from pretense, they are nearly always likable.

It is when they are hypocritical or brazen that they repel. To such fall none of the perquisites of sin.

It is notorious that many people considered good by others and by themselves are the severest judges of their fellow-creatures, the most ready to condemn.

There are good women who in their moral judgments achieve an almost inhuman cruelty.

On the other hand, there are sinners who, through sinning, have reached a Christ-like patience with others, expressing itself in the kind of sympathy that can come only from perfect understanding, from the power to feel with other sinners.

For they know that the state of sinning is not joyous but sad, that it is not to be condemned but to be pitied.

And this knowledge flowers into qualities that in people about them cause amazement and mystification.

These qualities are rare perquisites.

SOMETIMES one sin can make a character.

Many women, by sinning, have realized the meaning of goodness and dedicated themselves to goodness for the rest of their lives.

By losing virtue they have found virtue.

Sometimes they are women condemned by the world.

Thereafter they go through life like wonderful presences, shedding about them sympathy and peace.

In "Hester Prynne" Hawthorne has given a supreme example of a woman of this kind.

For when a good woman, one set apart from evil by the conditions of her life and by her nature, suddenly finds herself associated with evil, she becomes allied with all the sins of the world. These forces may either destroy her or make her over again into a creature fine, noble, through the fires of shame and pity.

There are men, too, who never learn the meaning of life till they have suffered through sin. Sometimes revelation comes through one sin, sometimes through a long career of sinning.

"Most sins," says a wise philanthropist who has associated with great sinners, "are only perverted virtues."

Perhaps, after all, the lessons of sin are really the lessons of virtue.

FOR WHAT is learned through sinning all sinners pay a heavy price.

And most of what is learned carries a weight of sadness. From it some sinners never escape. Even in the wisdom of sinners there is the dreadful knowledge that in a better way, by steadfastly following the stern principles of duty, they might have acquired all they have gained.

But how easily we speak of sin. One would think we knew what sin was and that it existed apart from people and that people rushed eagerly into sin.

And yet we know that sin exists, not outside of man, but within his consciousness, in the secret recesses of the heart.

Because we do evil it does not necessarily follow that we sin.

But there is no doubt about our sinning when we think evil and love evil.

## SIN

And in such thinking and loving there are few perquisites. There is chiefly destruction, loss.

PERHAPS to the divine understanding, those we consider the greatest sinners are among the least sinners or are no sinners at all.

And perhaps those who seem pillars of righteousness commit small acts every day of their lives that work for evil, acts of unkindness, maybe in the very name of virtue.

Surely for such there are no perquisites of sin.

For without the realization of sin there can be no perquisites.

THERE is a great difference among people in the capacity to feel the effects of sin. Where one may quickly recover and become apparently sound again, another, after committing perhaps the same sin, will be corrupted or made morbid for the rest of his life. The best we can acquire from sinning is the power to understand the meaning of the moral law and the importance of living in harmony with its working. From remorse there may be little or no gain. The healthy consciousness quickly reacts. For this reason we ought to be slow to condemn those who go on sinning lightly and inconsequently. Theirs may be only superficial blundering. On the other hand, of course, their indifference may be the result of hardness. Even here they deserve sympathy. Through repeated sinning they may have lost the meaning of life.

SOME of the saddest consequences of sin are experienced by those children who, before they acquire the capacity to understand and to resist, through unhappy circumstance, fall victims. Their sins may establish themselves as life-long vices. Many of them are inevitably started on the road to criminality. With the conviction that we are serving the ends of justice we

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give them terrible punishment. And yet they may be crippled by the very social organization that we so righteously uphold. Their presence among us ought to be one of the most potent means of teaching us to be slow to judge and to punish.

There are other ways, far more beneficent and far less dangerous. They give the sinners a chance to repair, so far as may be possible, the ravages of sin and to lead back consciousness into the ways of health.

NO MATTER how we may safeguard ourselves, there is not one of us who is free from those sudden rushes of temptation which at times seem almost uncontrollable as well as inexplicable. Perhaps they are revolts of nature, scorning restraint and violently self-asserting. Nearly always they are related to the egotism that, in its subordination to social law, often feels itself limited and irritated. They ought to make us more patient with one another. Each day they give us lessons in humility. It is perhaps due to our egotism that so many of these lessons are lost. We cannot reflect too often on the speech that moved Wesley to say as a prisoner passed him bearing the insignia of his disgrace: "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Wesley."

Such an attitude is in itself a beautiful perquisite.

SO LONG have we been told we are all sinners that the phrase has lost most of its meaning. Perhaps we can give it reality by reflecting that we are all potential criminals. The evil qualities that betray themselves to our consciousness might, under favorable circumstances, easily have led us into crime. When we look back on our lives we can see that we have passed through situations where, but for a chance, we might have committed offenses destructive of our peace of mind for the rest of our days. Who can say that in a moment of wrath he

has, at heart, never committed murder? As a matter of fact, nearly everyone of us is directly related to all the murderers of the world.

WE ALL recognize the vast difference between consciousness of sin and consciousness of being found out. And yet the two are often confused. They are really not related at all. There can surely be no moral value in regard for mere reputation. It may be a low form of selfishness. Consequently, there is no direct gain to sinners as a result of exposure and of punishment. Though they may say they have learned their lesson, they have really learned to dread, not sin, but some of its consequences. What is most important they have not learned at all. There are certain kinds of remorse and reform that are more ignoble than sinning, expressing fear and cunning. Indeed, this attitude may be noted among people highly esteemed. Though they may lead what we call good lives, there is really nothing estimable in their springs of action. They have no real character. With them conduct is simply a means of securing advantage.

INABILITY to turn away from the memory of sin, to forget, instead of being a merit, is likely to be a morbid condition of consciousness. Like the body, the soul ought to be able to throw off any unwholesomeness. Just now many cults are reaching out to those afflicted with this kind of sickness. What is it that they undertake to do? Is it not to restore the self-respect that to every human being is necessary for the resolute meeting of life? Its loss may react harmfully on both soul and body. Through it many a woman is sent to death or to degradation. Feeling herself abandoned to sin, she really becomes abandoned. She either goes into the depths or she offers herself to an ideal of punishment. In such

cases we find a curious bond between self-respect and reputation. Perhaps, after all, this kind of morbidness is mental weakness. The reproach of the world becomes self-reproach. Among men we can trace a similar process. Whatever may be the cause of the loss in self-respect, it works havoc. Of such men we sometimes say: "He has lost his grip." His moral muscles have become flabby. He is in the state where he may easily become the prey to any one of many disasters. Though they seem to come from without they really come from his own consciousness, denying all perquisites.

OUR worst sins, at any rate, those that would be considered worst by the world, may not give us the most trouble. Instead, they may find the easiest justification. We know that behind them there have been powerful forces. Moreover, they may have been confused with much that was good. Most of us, when we are seriously troubled by conscience, think of the minor offenses, the small unkindnesses, the petty meanesses. A deed of momentary cruelty, a flash of anger, may pursue us at intervals for the rest of our lives. For months or for years it may disappear. Then suddenly, at night or in the midst of an exciting day, it may suddenly rise into consciousness. Then we know that it has been hiding down there in the sub-conscious, an accusing and a menacing presence. Perhaps it comes in the shape of a look of pain that we have caused to appear in the face of the friend. Though instantly the friend forgave and forgot, indelibly the look was photographed. Perhaps it does us good, making us a little more controlled, a little more considerate and humble.

WE MAY not regard our worst sins as sins at all. We may even consider them virtues. Observe, for example, the working of the sins against sympathy, in effect,

## SIN

of all our sins, the most deadly. They usually express themselves through the confidence that goes with righteousness. They inspire bold operators, striking here and striking there in their blindness, mistaking their havoc for moral achievement, doing mischief often irreparable. The careers of such offenders suggest that, without sympathy, perhaps no good can be done by man, however sincere the motive may be, however lofty.

THOSE most to be pitied are the sinners who know that the effects of their wrong-doing are working out in the lives of others. Some of them, it is true, develop a remarkable callousness. Self-justification enables them to leap over hurdles apparently insurmountable. But among them, there are many who, at intervals, hear the accusing voice of conscience. Sometimes the desire to keep it silent leads them to acts of expiation. The wrong that is out of their reach they try to atone for by some gratuitous service. And if pride keeps them from righting the wrong within their reach they may make some covert restitution. Nearly everyone of us has been influenced in this way. Clergymen and public officials and psychologists can tell strange stories of people who, after being pursued by the memory of transgressions involving money or property, have tried to make atonement by secret refunding.

THOSE that pride themselves on maintaining a high standard of conduct sometimes forget that, though they may not themselves be what the world calls sinners, they may nevertheless be the cause of sin in others. Great evil has resulted from the attitude and the precepts of moral superiority. Those who make virtue unattractive harm the whole cause of virtue. Much of the sinning in the world may be laid at the door of the righteous. It is conceivable that in certain kinds of righteousness there is no real good. Though it may never be betrayed

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into sinful acts, its pride is in itself a continual sinning and incentive to sin.

THERE are people who carry some fearful temptation hidden in their natures. How it became lodged there is not always clear. Sometimes it seems as if it must have been part of them even before birth. More often it is possible to trace its beginnings. In some instances the victims themselves can point to the very moment when they gave it lodgment. On all such sufferers the world is inclined to turn a censorious face, perhaps to shrink away. In many instances it punishes with fearful severity. It seldom thinks of the anguish of the victims, the efforts to resist and to conquer the enemy, the repeated failures, the despairing outlook. Now and then one of them is successful. Perhaps for years he has been a drunkard or a drug fiend. He has gone through trials that most of us cannot even imagine. Now he has tested himself. The measure of his weakness becomes, in a sense, the proof of his strength. He is a far greater being than he could have been without that long trial. He has been forced to give his moral muscles tremendous exercise. They are like mighty sinews. To you and to me, as he passes, he may seem commonplace, uninteresting. But, to a finer eye, he is a giant.

SUCH a triumph, however, does not ask for our applause. Though we may have much to gain from its example we have little to give. From us it needs no praise. In itself it is sufficient. The moral failures, more numerous by far, cry out for understanding and help. Often they are bewildered by themselves. Vaguely they wonder why this burden has been put on a nature so unfit to bear it, so incapable of persistent struggle. In failure there may be even finer qualities than in success. At any rate, we know that it is not for us to pass judgment.



## SIN

Science has told us that in the vast number of these cases, if there is sin at all, it is the sin of other generations.

ABOUT us there are people, apparently free, who live in prison, undergoing sentence for the violation of nature's laws, made by those they have never seen. The blood running in their veins carries with it memories that are in themselves incitements to sin. While they live who can say there are no slaves in the world?

WE SOMETIMES speak of death as an escape or a release. But how much do we know? Constantly souls leave behind the children of the passions they have indulged, of the evil thoughts they have cherished. Now we can see the responsibility that each of us bears, not only to a Creator, but to ourselves and to those coming after. We are helping to mar or to make the future generations. We are custodians of their health and happiness. This thought is not nearly so despairing as it seems. Perhaps it is in our power to undo many generations of wrong, to turn weakness into strength, to establish a new line, an aristocracy of blood that shall be a high expression of character, to create the tendencies that shall be the greatest of all human perquisites, far transcending any perquisite that can come from sin.

## THE DESIRE TO DISAGREE

**R**ECENTLY I spent a day with some friends that treat me as a member of the family. Before me they have few or none of the concealments that so many of us practice with those outside the family circle.

It was a long time since I had mingled so freely with a large family group. I was rather æstonished at my impressions.

What struck me first of all was the ill-will among the members of that particular group. And yet they were exceptionally polite with one another. I cannot recall one unkind thing that was said in my presence. But, during the whole day, beneath the conversation there ran an undertone that was obviously not sympathy. It betrayed itself chiefly in disagreement of opinion, expressed with subtle but easily discerned ill feeling.

As the day passed and as I grew more and more uncomfortable, I became aware of something else in the relation of the members of that family.

Even where there was little chance for disagreement, there would still be some expression of disagreement, more or less vague and yet unmistakable.

And then I perceived that those people were all suffering from one of the most distressing forms of habit, antagonism, which reveals itself so often in the desire to disagree.

SINCE that time I have seen many expressions of this desire, not only in families, but among employers and employed, among friends, even among mere acquaintances. Where it is openly expressed it may lead to violent language and to quarreling, perhaps to blows. Where it is insidiously betrayed it creates bitterness for the time

## THE DESIRE TO DISAGREE

hidden, or revealed only in a continued expression of the desire to disagree.

All through our life runs this undercurrent of bitterness. It poisons the minds of individuals. It poisons the public consciousness. Directly and indirectly it leads to a vast number of evils.

Perhaps the worst of all the evils is that it makes human beings persistently go through life in a state of hostility.

THE OTHER day I went to call on a man who for several years had employed a remarkably clever secretary, a young college graduate. To my surprise, I noticed that, in place of the young fellow, there was a middle-aged woman. I asked the man how he happened to lose so valuable an assistant.

"The reason was simply and solely," he replied, "that he introduced into this office something I particularly dislike, ill-will. He got into the habit of challenging things that I said and did. And when I did not take his advice, or when I insisted on having things done just as I wanted them done, he would become disagreeable. I saw that it would be a great nuisance to have any one of his disposition about. So, in spite of his being one of the most helpful workers I have ever had, I let him go."

THERE are those who seem to be born with the instinct to disagree. I have in mind at this moment one such person. I have heard him express emphatically a certain opinion and then, perhaps a day or two later, I have heard him denounce the same opinion expressed in his presence by some one else.

Sometimes, of course, this kind of thing is done by those who love argument for the sake of the intellectual exercise. But in this instance it was due simply and solely to the love of disagreeing.

## THE DESIRE TO DISAGREE

How CAN we trace this love?

It surely must have a powerful cause. It must come from deep-seated impulse.

Obviously it is related to the passion for self-expression.

In the habitual denying of the opinions of others there is the persistent assertion of our own opinions, that is, of ourselves.

So the habit of disagreeing is unquestionably related to the quality that breaks out into so many evil consequences, egotism.

IF WE did not spend so much time in trying to disagree, if we did not torment ourselves with the ill feeling that accompanies the will to disagree, we should learn very much more than we learn now, and we should be surprised at the strange improvement in the people and in the world about us.

We should find that, through persistent self-assertion, instead of gaining, we lost.

We should also discover that through resisting the desire to disagree, through giving people as good a chance to express themselves as we long to give ourselves, we should exert a far greater influence than we do now, and we should be heard oftener and with more profit.

## REFORMERS

ONE SUNDAY night I took supper with a reformer. He was very successful in business and he lived in a beautiful house. Since moving there he had become a believer in the simple life. He used to complain a good deal about the house and about his way of living. Among his friends it was said that he wished to go to a less fashionable quarter and to live plainly, letting his wife do her own work. It was also whispered that his wife did not sympathize with his ideas and loved society with all that society implied.

People were sorry for the man.

At the supper table he explained with great satisfaction that the servants had gone out and his wife had prepared the meal with her own hands.

It seemed to me that he made a little too much of the incident.

Perhaps, however, I was mistaken.

Perhaps I was wrong, too, in thinking that the wife was not wholly pleased. Somehow I got the impression that he was, unconsciously, rubbing it in.

During the meal our host passed around a plate of prunes. When he offered them to his wife she said pleasantly: "No, thank you, dear."

"But they're very wholesome," he insisted. "You'd better have some."

"I don't care for prunes, thank you."

"They're good for you. You ought to eat them."

With a patient smile the wife took a prune.

That smile opened up a vista.

The reformer put down the plate with an air of content.

He had done good to his wife.

## REFORMERS

There was a moment's awkwardness. Then the talk flowed on.

I often think of that incident when I read about the domestic troubles of reformers.

There is nothing in the world more dangerous than the habit of doing people good.

ON ANOTHER occasion I met a group of reformers. The atmosphere seemed rarefied. The talk was of high things. We fairly bathed in spirituality.

Soon, however, the situation changed.

The reformers became involved in an argument.

They grew vehement, angry. Each tried to keep the others from talking that he might talk himself.

And I saw that they were all animated with fury, because they believed they were fighting for the right.

The fact was, of course, that each was fighting for his opinion, asserting himself, beating down the others so that his view might prevail.

It was a painful scene, yet comic.

No opinions were changed. There was great damage to feelings.

One remark struck me as particularly illuminating. But it wasn't merely a remark. It was a roar, directed by one reformer at another reformer. "I guess you haven't got the truth yet!"

ONE EVENING I chanced to be walking along the street with a reformer, a man in active political life. He had grown old in usefulness, but not in patience. He met a young man, also in public life, who had differed with him on a matter of public policy.

He assailed the young man. As he talked, he took a higher and higher moral tone. Before he finished he was nearly beside himself.

The young man showed respect to gray hairs. He bore

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the assault with amazing self-restraint, with touching courtesy.

At the close of the talk, the aged reformer and I walked on. He expressed delight with what he had done.

His whole being radiated a peace passing understanding.

He evidently thought that I had profited by a display of virtue so edifying.

Which of the two was right? I didn't know. My feelings wouldn't let me think.

CHARLES WAGNER, author of "The Simple Life," expressed what seemed to me a sound thought when he said that the millionaire riding in his carriage might be leading the simple life as truly and sincerely as the laborer walking along the street.

Rudyard Kipling once said that there were nine and ninety ways of writing of tribal lays and every blessed one of them was right.

We can't go far in morality before realizing that right is a relative thing and that those who disagree with us may be striving for it as earnestly as we are ourselves.

It is the spirit that counts.

WHEN I was a boy we used to keep at home, in the kitchen closet, a big wooden box filled with string, all kinds of string, all colors. Whenever I wanted string I would go to that box. Often I had a good deal of trouble drawing out a piece from the mesh.

In thinking of human character, I am sometimes reminded of the string in that box.

It is a mesh.

In this regard the character of even a reformer is like every other human character.

This commonplace observation may explain some mysteries, even why reformers are hard to live with.

## REFORMERS

PEOPLE used to be thought of as good people and bad people. Now we know better. There are no absolutely good people.

To some of us this thought is depressing. If there were absolutely good people it would be so pleasant to include ourselves among them.

On the other hand, the thought ought to give us all a good deal of comfort, for, just as there are no absolutely good people, there are no absolutely bad people.

Follow the notion to its logical conclusion and it will lead you into strange paths.

IDA TARBELL says: "Education should teach people to think things out to their logical conclusions and to adapt their moral conduct to those conclusions." Their moral conduct means, of course, their every-day conduct, their minute-to-minute life. It is the minute-to-minute life that makes the hardest test. If the reformers would only follow the suggestion in this definition they ought to become more patient with the world, more patient even with one another.



## ANGER

**A**S A BOY I used to observe certain grown-ups of my acquaintance with awe. They seemed to me to be wonderful people. Always they were kind and pleasant. And they were never patronizing, like some of the other grown-ups that I did not care for at all.

I remember the shock I received when I saw one of those heroes of mine show anger. It was as if he had suddenly become a demon.

Then I had my first realization of the extraordinary change that anger could create in a human being.

I SUPPOSE that all children, consciously or unconsciously, go through the same experience. And yet, horrible as anger appears in their eyes, it doesn't keep them from showing anger themselves. On the contrary, it actually encourages them to express anger, according to nature's habit of teaching by imitation.

WE OCCASIONALLY hear of "righteous anger." We mean anger that is justified by circumstances.

But, in a sense, all anger is righteous. That is, all anger justifies itself in the mind of the person who feels the anger.

In another sense, there is no such thing as righteous anger.

For no anger can really justify itself.

ANGER is a form of madness. The words we apply to it show that human beings have long recognized its character. We still speak of angry people as mad. We sometimes say that they are "furious" or "in a fury."

## ANGER

Some people are led by anger into the most violent excesses. Anger is one of the commonest causes of murder and it often leads to the infliction of blows, mental or physical, that might easily occasion murder. Oftener still it commits murder without loss of life, by doing to minds and souls mischief irreparable.

In one respect anger is like drunkenness. It tends to destroy prudence.

Where the intoxication of anger is complete, prudence disappears altogether. Then the way is clear for infamy.

There are some people who, when they have once yielded to anger, lose all control. They snatch any weapon within reach. If they cannot strike with things they will strike with words, often far more terrible in their effect.

They will make statements that can never be atoned for, that will sting and burn to the end of life.

SOMETIMES anger is referred to as "temper." And among many people to have a temper is considered creditable. It is in some way associated with power.

Here is a common confusion of thought. Good qualities associated with a bad quality are likely to confer on the bad quality a false character.

On the other hand, bad qualities associated with a good quality may completely destroy respect for the good quality.

The pride that people take in having a temper often leads them to shameful indulgence in anger. And repeated indulgence tends to destroy the capacity for self-control.

As a matter of fact, nearly every one has a capacity for temper, that is, for anger.

It is associated with all our deepest qualities, with egotism, the instinct for self-preservation and for self-assertion.

## ANGER

Anger, after all, is very largely an arrogant and violent assertion of oneself.

It is a gross expression of tyranny.

PEOPLE who habitually yield to anger are likely to acquire an erroneous notion of their own power.

For there is no doubt that in anger there is a good deal of power. It often gets what it wants, like every form of self-assertion and tyranny. And what it loses may not be apparent on the surface. Nevertheless what it loses may be so vast as to be incalculable.

For, great as the power of anger may be in some cases, it is pitifully small compared with the power of its opposite quality, self-control. And just as self-control may often seem to be weakness, anger may seem to be strength.

The truth is, of course, that real strength lies not in anger, but in the control of anger.

IN THE last chapter of Tolstoy's novel, "The Kreutzer Sonata," there is a wonderful description made by a murderer of his sensations while killing his wife in anger. Here Tolstoy gives an exhibition of his genius, of his power to see clearly into the deepest springs of action.

The murderer explains that, though his anger grew more and more violent as he approached closer and closer to the point where he knew he should commit murder, he never lost the sense that by an effort of will he could control himself.

It was as if he were two persons, one passionately yielding to his anger, the other calmly looking on, judging and warning.

In moments of anger many of us have realized this double personality. We have known that any indulgence of our anger was a weakness. And we have realized none the less clearly because we yielded till we were in a fury.

## ANGER

Even in our fury we have stood apart and watched ourselves and warned.

Perhaps this double consciousness explains why some strong natures, in the midst of wrath, suddenly become still as death.

There are comparatively few people who have not something of this double consciousness. It is the saving remnant in human nature, the voice of wisdom, however smothered, warning us against danger.

## A PLANT

**T**HE PLANT was given us by a kindly old gardener, straight out of his garden. It was a tall, erect geranium, with many rose-pink blossoms, nearly all double. I can see it now as it gracefully swayed in the breeze. It had a kind of radiance. When we reached home we didn't know just where to put it; but we found a nook in the corner of the dining-room, just beyond one of the windows.

A FEW DAYS later a friend who loves flowers came and noticed that geranium. He was delighted with the color of the blossoms. He asked for a slip for his garden and he carried one away.

AFTER several weeks one of us noticed that the geranium was drooping and that the flowers were changing from pink to white. "See what a difference it makes," he said, "when a plant is taken from out of doors and kept in the house. I don't believe this geranium will last long. If we had room on the porch we might keep it there."

But we had no room on the porch.

MONTHS passed. Gradually the geranium was reaching nearer and nearer the ground. At last it seemed like another kind of plant. We could hardly relate those crawling stalks to the beauty we had first seen, so vital, so ambitious, seeming to reach out to the sky. Most of the flowers had disappeared. Some of the branches looked as if they had become paralyzed. One was seemingly dead. Two bore a few delicate blossoms, white and single.

## A PLANT

ONE DAY came the friend that had taken away the slip. Some instinct at once led him to that geranium. "Hello!" he said, and he bent forward as a doctor might bend at a bedside. He made regretful sounds as he examined the prostrate stalks and the withering leaves and the sickly blossoms.

Rapidly I proceeded to tell about the drooping of the plant. As he listened he kept bending forward. Not once did he look at me. Finally he stood up. There was an expression of impatience in his face.

"Don't you see what you have done?" he said.

I was surprised. "What I have done?" I repeated, feeling resentful.

"You have just about ruined this plant."

"Oh, by keeping it indoors?" I said, feeling myself exonerated.

"Not at all. It would have been all right if you had only given it a little care. It needs light. That's why it has drooped so and why the blossoms have lost their color and life. By just pushing this table in front of the window you might have kept it in fine condition. Look at these stalks. See how they have tried to reach the light. They knew it was their only chance of salvation. And these blossoms! They're like anæmic children."

I lifted the little table with my hands and placed it in front of the window.

"Now we're all right," said the friend cheerfully. "Just wait and see what will happen."

NOW, NEARLY two months later, the geranium is gradually rising from the ground. It has several single blossoms, of a pale pink, and one double blossom of the same shade. It still shows that it has suffered. But it seems happy. All day long it drinks in the light. Some day I believe it really will thrive again.

#### A PLANT

YESTERDAY I went to the country to see our friend. He took me into his garden. He pointed to a large geranium, lusty and radiant, with rose-pink flowers, very like the plant I had taken from its soil.

"There's your slip," he said. "See what you can do when you give a plant a chance."

## NERVES OF SYMPATHY

ONE NIGHT, during a theatrical performance, as I was standing with an actor friend in the wings of a theatre, a very pretty and clever young girl came off the stage. As soon as she passed out of sight of the audience she uttered a little exclamation of impatience: "Awful people!" she said. "They haven't any nerves."

When the girl had passed up the corridor to her dressing-room, I turned to the actor beside me and I asked him what she had meant. He replied with a smile: "Oh, that's a little expression of hers. She often uses it. She means that those people aren't sympathetic and quick to catch on. They sit there like blocks of wood. They don't come prepared to appreciate the good points. So they can't establish any relation with the play or the actors."

SINCE that time I have often thought of the expression, "They haven't any nerves." I have been surprised to find how aptly it applies to many people in life and how clearly it explains many situations.

Whenever I go into a hall where I am to give a lecture I find myself glancing quickly over the faces in the audience for signs of nerves. As a rule, I see at once a few faces that appear to be sympathetic. Those people, I know, are likely to have nerves. Often as I go on talking I pick out certain of the faces and, scarcely realizing what I am doing, I speak to them. Other speakers have told me that they do the same thing.

There are people that I see in audiences who cause me apprehension and dread. The mere sight of them suggests that they have no nerves. Often, I am sure, I do



## NERVES OF SYMPATHY

them a great injustice. The stolid, half-challenging, half-resentful look in their eyes may not really represent what is going on in their minds and in their sympathies.

Most of all, in lectures, I fear children. Of course, they ought not to be there. As a rule, they have no nerves of sympathy. I am always sorry for the mischance that has brought them; but I am more sorry for myself. For the presence of listeners without nerves of sympathy may be a serious distraction to those about them, as well as a disturbance to the lecturer. Often, in the middle of a talk, the children become fearfully bored with the lecture and resort to giggling and whispering, sometimes to loud talking. The parents that have brought them evidently have no realization of the distress they may cause the lecturer or the damage they may do to the lecture.

ON ONE occasion I witnessed a scene, both comic and pitiful, where a whole audience was virtually without nerves. It was at an entertainment in a settlement house in the East Side in New York. A large audience had gathered to hear some professional actors, belonging to an excellent company then playing on Broadway. These actors had very generously accepted an invitation to come to this alien world and to entertain the people of the neighborhood. One of them, a very gifted interpreter of character parts, proceeded to recite the dramatic poem, "Laska." At first the people listened with curiosity. As the poem grew more impassioned and the actor became more tragic in his interpretation, they began to laugh. The actor, evidently believing that he could conquer through intensity, grew more intense. The audience laughed more uproariously. For several moments the contest went on between audience and actor. It resulted in a complete victory for the audience. During the last verse, though the voice of the actor could be heard, the words were completely drowned in shouts of merriment.

## NERVES OF SYMPATHY

The actor left the stage, covered with perspiration, the hall resounding with satirical applause.

Of course that audience behaved very rudely. But the situation was comprehensible. The listeners were not used to that kind of emotional expression. They had no nerves that enabled them to respond to it. It merely impressed them as ridiculous. So the reaction was altogether normal.

I don't know whether the actor realized this working of cause and effect. If he did, perhaps the realization gave him no comfort. He did not venture out again.

I ONCE took a friend to see a performance of Sudermann's play, "Magda." I had seen it several times and each time, instead of enjoying it less, I enjoyed it more. Although my friend did not care particularly for the literary drama, I felt sure that this play would appeal to him. To my disappointment, he looked on with an expression in his face of utter fatigue. He felt no sympathy for the distracted Magda and her troubles. The play impressed him as much ado about nothing. It was simply that he was lacking in the kind of nerves that would enable him to establish a sympathetic relation with the people on the stage and their doings. Naturally, he considered "Magda" a bad play and he said so quite frankly. It did not occur to him that the fault, if there were any fault, might lie in himself.

HERE indeed is the explanation of many of our disappointments in life and in those reproductions of life that we call art. We are simply lacking in the kind of nerves that would enable us to appreciate them.

You know, of course, that oft quoted saying of Goethe's that in traveling we get from a new place what we take there. It applies not only to places, but virtually to everything else in life. It all depends on our nerves. If

#### NERVES OF SYMPATHY

we reach out sympathetically to the whole world the whole world reaches out to us. Then life becomes for us a multitude of opportunities for both giving and receiving, for the enjoying of rare experiences each day.

So it might seem as if it might be worth our while to see whether we were well supplied with sympathetic nerves and to be solicitous about preserving and developing those we have.

## THE LIFE INSTINCT

**D**ID YOU happen to read in a newspaper a short time ago about the New York man who tried to make his quietus? He was carried off in an ambulance, seriously injured. On the way to the hospital the ambulance became involved in a collision. Several persons were hurt.

In the excitement the would-be suicide forgot about himself and gave efficient help.

As soon as we forget ourselves we forget our troubles.

This ordinary fact of experience we all know. The marvel is that we don't act on it more.

So often we see the best way for ourselves and we deliberately choose the worst.

"When you feel depressed, do something for some one else," is an idea, in one form or another, dinned into our minds.

In fact, we hear it so often that for many of us the words have lost their meaning.

Here is one of the dangers of wise sayings.

Do you suppose that would-be suicide will profit by the lesson he had on the way to the hospital?

Will he sink back into the morbid habit of thinking that made his life intolerable?

Was his attempt to destroy his life merely one of those impulses that have only a transient meaning?

On leaving the hospital will he accept life again as normal people do?

Will he even enjoy living?

A WOMAN of my acquaintance prides herself on her skill in palmistry.

She knows a good deal about the subject.

She knows much more about human weaknesses.

And she relies far less on her knowledge of palmistry than on her knowledge of human weaknesses.

One of her greatest effects she makes by saying: "You have thought of committing suicide."

The first time I heard her say it was to an elderly man, prosperous and apparently happy. He grew pale and then red.

The woman glowed as people do in the consciousness of success.

Then she said, apparently fixing her eyes on the lines of the hand: "But you will never do it."

Afterward I watched her as she repeated this effect. The subject was a young girl.

The girl's agitation was painful to see.

"But you will never do it," the palmist said impressively, with her eyes close to that long and beautiful hand.

It was a wicked thing to do, but the soothing reference to the future showed that the woman had some conscience.

She was probably afraid of the power of suggestion.

Nevertheless she had to gratify her own vanity, as so many of us do, even at the cost of another's pain.

THAT palm reader took an unworthy advantage of her knowledge that every human life has its moments of intense depression, of something like despair.

Lately people have come forward proffering aid to their fellow-creatures in such trial. They suggest many things, including rest, relaxation, fresh air, exercise, self-forgetfulness, service.

For many such advice is helpful. For many others it is not easy to follow.

Think, for example, of advising a man who can get no work to do, who sees his family in want, think of telling him to be of service to the world. Such counsel would make him long to commit murder.

The best we can do for those that find life almost unendurable is to help remedy the conditions that lie far beneath the surface, breaking out into this form of social disease as well as into many other forms. And there is no evil in life that has such varied and far-reaching expressions, all tending to weaken the life instinct, as social injustice.

If we could trace the causes of the attempts to commit suicide throughout the world we should find that in nearly every instance they were in some way related to our false and unstable conditions of living, to our having either too little or too much.

MANY years ago something happened in our neighborhood that left an impression on me I shall always retain.

A little girl was taken from an orphan asylum by some Christian people. The mother in the family was in purpose an excellent woman, but a martinet.

She had no sympathy with the weaknesses and the faults of that child.

She assumed that the child had a bad inheritance. So she was always on the watch for evil.

And when people are looking for a thing they usually find it. They always find it when it is evil and when they wish to see it.

Daily, hourly, that woman tried to lead the child toward perfection by the hideous avenues of torment.

One day the child went down to the beach. As it was out of season the people who lived nearby wondered what she was doing there.

To their amazement they saw her walk slowly into the water.

## THE LIFE INSTINCT

They rushed to her and forced her to come back.  
The incident created excitement in the neighborhood.  
Feeling ran high.

It put that excellent Christian woman in an unpleasant position.

CHILDREN often long to make their quietus—well-meaning grown-ups persecute them so.

I often wonder there remains in the world as much goodness as there is. Grown-ups make it so hateful to children that one might fancy they would loathe it all their lives.

One might fancy, too, that the new generation would put an end to goodness for all time, would forbid its ever being mentioned.

But the sufferers forget their torments and pass them on to other children, usually to their own children.

Here is one of the causes of morbid thought and impulse in children.

Many children love to think of themselves as dead so that they may enjoy the luxury of fancying the remorse and grief of those they are dear to, those who, as they believe, have made them unhappy.

Sometimes they even threaten to kill themselves, hoping to strike terror in those about them.

It is only when they become frantic with resentment that they make a real attempt.

For the life instinct holds them firmly, seldom granting to morbid imagination more than a passing indulgence.

EVEN among grown-ups it is almost a proverb that those who threaten to destroy themselves never carry out the threat.

Usually the threat has no relation to intention.

It is made simply and solely for the purpose of inspiring sympathy and exciting terror.

In the delightful comedy, "The Royal Family," Captain Robert Marshall introduces the figure of a kindly old priest, a genial philosopher. That priest delivers a beautiful speech about the way he would like to rearrange life. Instead of having people born young and making them grow older and older, he would have them born old and make them grow younger and younger. The fancy always delights an audience, and wins a burst of applause; but pretty as it is, it seems to me that it is not a real improvement on the present arrangement. It would make life a recession instead of what it now is, or ought to be, a progression.

For as we grow older we ought to grow, not less and less rich in experience, not less and less wise, but wiser and wiser and in experience richer and richer.

And we all know at least a few people who, as they go on living, make such a progression. If we study their lives we invariably find that they have retained their capacity for enjoying life, for keeping their diversions.

In many instances we find that they have made all the experiences of life a diversion.

For the great secret seems to be not to turn pleasure into occupation, but to turn occupation into pleasure.

INDIFFERENCE to life is like our wide-spread indifference to our surroundings. At times we all become tired of our surroundings or bored. We think of other places, other circumstances, and we assure ourselves that if we could only be there we should be better off. Sometimes we find help in such a change of scene. We return to the old scene with new vigor, with freshness of mind that brightens all the old associations. But if we remain in the new scene until it ceases to be new we are likely to fall back to the old state of mind.

The explanation is, of course, that the trouble lies not



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in our surroundings or in our circumstances, but in our attitude of mind.

So, in the other world, can't you imagine that those who violently take themselves off must encounter bitter disappointment? Perhaps for a time they know the relief that comes with novelty. But, though the scene may be different, they remain themselves.

Often when we think we are tired of the things and the people about us, we are really tired of ourselves.

THERE is a certain pathos in the efforts recently made by the law to restrain suicide by punishment.

There is even a comic aspect.

Best of all, there is the evident desire to help. For we cannot think of any representative of the law really wishing to punish a suicide, to add another burden to a life intolerably burdened.

There must be on the part of those directly concerned a swift desire to save, to succor and to console.

The Salvation Army has lately been trying to do what it could for such unfortunates. It seeks to discover causes and if possible to secure remedies. Perhaps its work will be one of the many ways by which the world shall be led to deal with the far-reaching causes that drive people into the self-destroying class, making them despair of finding help.

It is obvious that the point of view of such people is wrong, for the instant their needs are known they receive help. Indeed, the way they are treated when they have failed in their purpose shows what an ocean of human sympathy lies under our apparent indifference.

In declaring that it intends to punish suicides the law really means that it intends to help them. It strives to put a further obstacle in their path. But yet the effort toward prevention is largely futile. It is only those

who fail that can be helped. The law recognizes that these people will be amenable to help. It sees that as soon as the interval of despair passes there will be the return of reason. It is through this return of reason that the law may do the real work, through the intelligent guiding that is bound to come when the working of the law allies itself more and more closely, as it is now doing, with the forces of intelligence.

IN "THE INFERNO," Dante has given a ghastly picture of the souls of suicides.

Most of us nowadays would consider it far too horrible to be true.

And yet, is it unlikely that in the other world, it is discreditable not to have accepted life with all its burdens and to have endured the burdens to the end? Is it conceivable that there is any possible escape? If there are burdens here why should there not be burdens there? And why should there not be discredit as well as credit? And why should there not be a fulfillment there, both of the present duties and of the duties avoided elsewhere, including the supreme duty of living finely?

HERE we are considering, of course, those cases where suicides are not the result of insanity. There are those who go so far as to say that there are no such cases, that all who destroy themselves are diseased.

The Catholic Church seems to be inclining toward such a view. At any rate, where it once refused to bury suicides in consecrated ground, it now gives them the benefit of the doubt by never refusing them burial.

On the other hand, the Romans made a fine art of self-destruction. They carried life to so high a degree of art that they made self-slaughter artistic.

But life is much greater than an art. It is greater even than a duty. It is, perhaps, a combination of both, with something added.

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And no art can transcend making life consistent and whole, seeing it through to the end, without surrender.

MANY YEARS ago a steamer in Long Island Sound caught fire. Hundreds of people went to their death. In the excitement a well-dressed man stood on the upper deck and looked down. He saw there was no possible escape. He drew a pistol from his pocket and shot himself.

The act struck me at the time as selfish.

And yet there are doubtless people who would consider it courageous.

But how ruthless it was of that man to separate himself from the ordeal that so many had to bear together, and to add to the horror of the scene another horror.

I RECENTLY heard a startling story showing a curious freak of life instinct.

A very highly accomplished and charming woman of New York, who, in her youth, had made an unfortunate marriage, leading to divorce, reached happiness at last through marriage with a man of distinguished ability and generous character.

Her first husband had forced her to leave him by his persistent dissipation. One day her second husband read in the newspaper that, from a debauch, his predecessor had met with a terrible accident and was lying dangerously ill in a charity hospital. He showed his wife the newspaper item and he said: "Now that man was once very dear to you. In his misery it seems to me that he has some sort of claim. At any rate, I think we ought to do something for him." He then proposed that he take the man out of the hospital to his home and have him cared for. The wife agreed. The next day the man, broken in body and spirit, was brought to the house and tenderly nursed for several weeks. One day he was left alone for a few moments. Then he was found dead in

bed with a pistol at his side. One cannot be sure whether he killed himself during a sudden attack of despair or from shame, from the self-reproaches caused by such kindness.

THERE is a story told about Napoleon after the battle of Waterloo. Some one, realizing that he was ruined, offered him poison. He shook his head and replied: "Never do a thing you can never regret." These words subtly conveyed the strongest of all arguments against suicide. At any rate, so far as this life is concerned, suicide is final. It rejects all possible wisdom and hope and retrieval that may lie in the future. It is identifying oneself for all times with failure and with weakness.

One wonders what those people who take themselves off think of those left behind, those they were near to and dear.

Perhaps they don't think.

The act may in itself be evidence that they can't think.

RICHARD HODGSON, for many years secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, was the only healthy-minded man I ever knew who wanted to die.

And yet he had that most delightful of all qualities, the quality educators ought to foster in students to the highest degree, intellectual and social and moral curiosity.

This curiosity is so different from petty curiosity, that most contemptible of qualities, it's a pity the same word is applied to both.

But Hodgson had a still greater curiosity, also noble in its nature and deeply human, a desire to know what went on in the life beyond.

He used to say that he could hardly wait for his time to come.

Meanwhile, however, he went cheerfully on with his

tasks and with his play. Besides being a great worker, he was a great tennis player, a great walker and a great swimmer, a hearty, wholesome Englishman.

One day, in the midst of his activities, he dropped dead.

When I heard of his death I had a feeling of elation.

The world was the poorer for the loss of that bright spirit. But he had gone where he longed to be, to a new and absorbing field of activity.

And now it is reported that he is continuing his old work, trying to connect the two worlds. The only difference is that he is working from the other side.

IT TAKES a terrible amount of suffering to weaken the life instinct. And it takes a trifling circumstance to restore it to vigor.

William Dean Howells once gave an illustration in a story. A highly emotional European decided to commit suicide. He was going to throw himself from a height. On his way to the place his hat blew off. He became so absorbed in his chase for the hat that he forgot his morbid purpose.

I know men who say they are tired and they wouldn't mind if death came tomorrow. Most of them add that they have no desire ever to wake up.

Of course they are sick.

They have lost the appetite for living, exactly as some sick people lose the appetite for food.

Their senses are dulled, those precious agents of wholesome enjoyment.

Maybe they have fatigued the senses by using them unwholesomely.

Maybe they have made their senses unwholesome by letting themselves think in unwholesome ways.

Often they need only rest.

Far more often, I suspect, they need a new point of view.

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Occasionally the trouble comes from a flaw in our machinery, physical, mental or moral.

Sometimes we call it a kink.

It behooves us to watch out for such kinks and correct them.

The great point is to keep the mind healthy.

One way is by thinking, not inwardly, as so many of us do, but outwardly, not with reference to ourselves alone, but with consideration for the rest of the world.

## SPITE FENCES

**Y**ESTERDAY I went into a very attractive apartment, on the top floor of a high house, with a fine view of the sea. There were windows on three sides. But the windows on one side were dark. A high fence rose past them a few feet away.

I asked how that fence happened to be there. Laconically the answer came: "Spite!"

"How did it happen?" I said.

"The man that lives on the other side of the fence lived there for twenty-five years before this building went up. He used to enjoy looking out and watching the ships. Most of those ships he knew by name. When the present owner bought this property and decided to build he objected. You see, he had enjoyed the view so long he thought he owned it."

I couldn't help smiling. Though I sympathized with the people occupying the apartment, I was relishing this little expression of human nature.

"I suppose he couldn't afford to buy this property," I said.

"Oh, yes, he could afford it all right. In fact, after the property was sold he offered to buy it for the amount it had been sold for, and he offered to pay for the architect's fees and the other fees that had been paid in the drawing of the plans for this house."

"But he offered no bonus?"

"None. When this building was finished he put up the fence. Later he said he had put it up in self-defense, to hide the sight of the house—it was so ugly."

There was another delightful illustration of human nature. In doing this mean act the man made an excuse to himself, as most of us do under similar circumstances.

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He couldn't accept his meanness as part of himself. So he called it by another name.

SINCE that conversation I have been thinking about the monuments of spite that we see about us. Nearly every community has at least one spite house. And spite fences are common.

Often the grievances that lead to the feeling of spite are just as unreal as the grievance of that property owner who thought he owned his view. If we could examine them we should find that in most instances they could be traced to egotism. And egotism is always due to defective imagination. If we could realize others as intensely as we realize ourselves we should be far less egotistical, far less clamorous for what we call our rights, and far less eager to inflict torment on ourselves by striving to torment others.

For all monuments of spite are expressions of self-torment.

These monuments, it is true, give to some natures a delirious joy. But the greater the joy the greater the pain that has gone before and that still lies behind and is sure to reassert itself.

For spite is only a transient relief for pain. It may be the means of causing more pain to the spiteful.

The more revenge we secure for our wrongs, real or fancied, the more those wrongs are likely to pursue us.

A PHILOSOPHER of my acquaintance, on returning here from Europe, found himself involved with the customs authorities. They made him pay several hundred dollars which he had good reason to believe he should not have paid. But the technicalities of the law were against him. He was broad-minded enough to see that the customs authorities, from their point of view, were doing



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their duty. It seemed that there was only one thing to do, to take the matter into court. But the case was likely to be irritating and tedious. It would encroach on his time, which was valuable, and it would cause him a great deal of inconvenience. After thinking the matter over, he decided that it would not pay him to go to law. So he dismissed the matter from his mind.

How many of us would have had the self-control and the simple common sense to take this course? Most of us would have allowed the injustice to rankle. Some of us would have tried to get even with the authorities. Under certain conditions, some of us might have resorted to crime or to what would be regarded as crime.

And all such resistance would have brought out a frenzy of ill feeling, very hard to bear and very like the feeling expressed in spite fences. Of course, it would have been used to express very noble ideas like justice and fair play; but it would really have been the gratification of the injured egotism, which is merely one expression of the spirit of revenge.

WE OFTEN hear people speak of just revenge. But there is no such thing.

All revenge is unjust revenge, even revenge taken in a just cause. And what we call just revenge is as distressing to those that secure it as any other kind of revenge.

For where the spirit is revengeful, where it expresses wounded egotism, the penalties are inevitable.

IN THE complications and in the confusion of life we can never secure exact justice. Those who expect it and try to get it for themselves are sure to be disappointed. They would do far better to devote the energy to doing their part in securing justice for others. In this way they will put the world in an attitude toward them that will make

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it easier for them to enjoy life and they will secure something that is far better than justice.

IF ONCE we get into the habit of treating the rest of the world generously, we shall be surprised to find how little we shall have to complain of.

Consider the case of the owner of that spite fence, for example. Suppose he had been more generous in his attitude. In losing his view he would have realized how lucky he had been to enjoy it for so many years, and he would have borne in mind that other people had as much right as he had himself to the full value of their property. No matter how much regret he might have felt, he would have spared himself a vast amount of suffering. Incidentally, he would have avoided the iniquity of deliberately and wantonly depriving his neighbors of light and air.

## THE SHADOW

**I**F YOU have read Galsworthy's novel "Fraternity," you know what the Shadow is.

The Shadow is the counterpart of you, the counterpart of me.

For Galsworthy has spread the idea that every one of us has his counterpart in the slums.

The thought is distressing.

But there are some distressing things that ought to be thought of. If we don't think of them there is danger of starving the sympathies.

And it is by our sympathies that we escape from the narrowness of our own interests and conceits.

Suppose for a while we think of the Shadow.

**I**F YOU have ever had your double pointed out to you, you must remember your surprise and disappointment.

"What! Do I look like that?"

And haven't you noticed how startled you've been on suddenly coming upon yourself in a mirror? There is the instinctive impulse to improve yourself by a change of expression, or by a touch here and there.

When we don't wish to appear at our best before ourselves we may be sure that we are in a bad way, probably morbid.

And yet if we could get out of ourselves and see ourselves from an unbiased point of view, the revelation, in spite of the pain, would be wholesome.

Better still would be the things we should learn from our counterparts in the Shadow World.

**W**E SPEAK of the Shadow World as a world apart, as

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we speak of purgatory or of hell. Yet it merges into our own world.

The Shadow People don't live in the slums all the time. They come up into the highways where you and I walk.

They pass us in the street. Their eyes often meet our eyes. Do they recognize us? I wonder.

Perhaps suffering has made their senses keener than ours. And our senses may be blunted by our not wishing to recognize them, by our lack of interest.

If they recognize us, what can they think? Do they feel an impulse to call out for help to those Other Selves?

Do they long to become those Other Selves? Or are they seized with a terrible rage against those Other Selves? Or are they tempted to curse the human life that permits such injustice, such inhumanity?

However, I am sure the Shadow People don't suspect. If they did they couldn't be so patient. They would assert the claims of their blood. They would insist that they be received into their heritage.

OFTEN since I heard he was here have I looked for my Shadow Man. As I walk along the busy street, I say to myself: "Perhaps he is in this crowd, close enough to touch. Perhaps he is hungry. Perhaps he is on the verge of committing a crime in the hope of escaping from his plight."

It seems strange, impossible.

And yet so easily I might be in his place.

If I only felt perfectly sure how I looked I might recognize him and speak to him.

But the thought of standing there in the street and talking with my Shadow Man makes me feel uncomfortable.

STILL the idea is fascinating.

What would he say to me?

## THE SHADOW

Would he pour out his anguish in a passion of broken words?

Would he feel that he could speak because at last he had found some one that could understand?

But why should he fancy that I could understand him better than any one else?

Would he be surprised at my willingness to speak to him? Would he suspect some selfish motive?

Surely he would detect my shame.

THEN I said to myself: "How foolish I am, thinking of my Shadow as if he were exactly like me with all the advantages I have had over him!"

I was puzzled at finding myself reasoning in this way. What were those advantages? Surely they were nothing wonderful. They were no more than most of the people had that I knew.

But I couldn't go on with this self-deception. I had to look at myself now from the point of view of my Shadow.

I began to see myself with his eyes.

I acknowledged that in one way I was lucky. I had the benefit of long years of schooling.

Now I felt the eyes of the Shadow fixed upon me. They were like my own as they appeared in the mirror, and yet they were different, too.

The difference troubled me.

And gradually from behind those eyes I could see the outlines of a face, vague, distorted.

Presently the face came forward.

It revealed itself more definitely. I recognized the look often seen in the faces of the poor, the lost look, the look turned inward, the look of despair.

The face came nearer, and nearer, and nearer, growing painfully distinct. When it almost touched mine it stopped.

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"Have you anything to say?" I asked. I am afraid my voice trembled.

"You speak for me," my Shadow Man replied.

IN THAT moment of illusion, when I seemed to face my Other Self, I knew how stupid my first idea of my Shadow had been.

How could my Shadow have anything to say to me when he hadn't been trained to say anything?

He could only feel.

"Perhaps that is why they always seem so patient," I thought. "They have not learned to express their feelings."

But as the words passed through my mind I seemed to hear that strange voice speaking from a distance, like an echo: "Speak for me."

So I MUST speak for that Other Self in the slums, my Shadow, the man I might have been.

What could I say?

I went back to the beginning.

We had been alike, my Shadow and I. When came the moment that we began to grow apart?

Surely it could not have come with the first drops drawn from our mothers' breasts.

Was it when the first sights and sounds broke on our consciousness? Or did we grow, side by side though far away, till our longings began to assert themselves, our aspirations, our dreams?

Were his thwarted and stunted while mine were fostered?

He must have gone to school in those early years. All boys go to school. Certainly he must have been doing just what I did.

But school isn't everything. There are the influences of the home, of the street.

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He was living down there, my Shadow Boy, in the slums.

Already they had closed around him, the shadows of that terrible thing the philosophers and the social reformers call "environment."

Already they must have caught him.

Into the shadows he must go deeper, and deeper, and deeper.

AND NOW I feel as if I were parting from my Shadow Man. But how can I part from him? Is he not going through life with me? So long as I stay, he stays.

What did he do at the end of his brief schooling? Did he become one of the millions that trudge wearily to work in the early morning and tend a machine till nightfall?

How long did it take to make him forget his early hopes and ambitions?

Perhaps he didn't forget. Perhaps at night when he returned home he would try to lead the life of the imagination.

Did it take him years to realize that he was in the grip of fate?

Did he try to resist?

Perhaps he didn't even try.

Would I have tried under the same circumstances, worn out in body and brain? Certainly not.

Then I thought of his years of monotonous labor, of tread-mill routine, of under-pay.

But these things seemed almost Paradise compared with the times when there was a worse monotony, idleness, when there was no work and no pay.

The eyes of my Shadow told me there had been many such times.

SUPPOSE, on the other hand, my Shadow and I had changed places.

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Suppose it were he who had the chances.

He might have done more with them. He might have done the things I had left undone, the things I had only dreamed.

Perhaps, in the economy of things, here lies the greatest waste. It may be it is I, who, in some mysterious way, have cheated him out of his birthright, it is I who should be in his place.

AND THE counterpart of you—think about him! Ask yourself if you have done as well by your chances as he might have done if they had been his chances.

And if you are a woman, let your heart go out to that Shadow in the slums.

For terrible as poverty is to a man it is far more terrible to a woman. It may drive her into degradation worse than death.

This thought you might keep in mind when you are tempted to condemn the women of the streets.

Those women are Shadows of women as good as you. And if Environment had been more merciful they might have been good women, too.

SHALL we let them stay there, the Shadow People? Shall we not lift a finger to help them escape?

It seems a hopeless task. They are millions. And each one of us is only one.

But if we would only work together how easy the task would be.

If we will not help them to escape, there is something else we can do.

We can help them to resist Environment.

And we can help to improve Environment for them.

And, best of all, we can help them to help themselves.

And all these things we may do by forgetting, for a



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moment, about ourselves and thinking of our just relation to that strange growth, called Society.

ALREADY a mighty movement has begun among the Shadow People. It recognizes their claim on one another. It asserts their claim on us.

And when they find that each of them has an Other Self among us the claim will be all the stronger.

But before that day comes why cannot we be great enough to acknowledge the relation and to live up to it in all its responsibilities, in all its joys?

## INTERFERING

**Y**ESTERDAY I walked along the street in an uncomfortable state of mind. I had just received a letter from a friend, telling of something he had done, something I disapproved. I felt sure that he had blundered. I blamed him severely. If he had been present it would have been a relief to me to express myself. I decided to write to him. Then I began to plan the letter. I grew more excited, more uncomfortable. I walked rapidly.

Then I realized.

I said to myself: "Why are you letting yourself to be so upset? What concern is it of yours? You aren't the one that made the blunder. And, after all, the blunder may be only in your imagination. Besides, if it really is a blunder, there is no reason why you should interfere or be disturbed. Now that the thing is done your excitement and interference could do no good whatever."

Instantly I felt relieved. It was as if a burden had lifted itself from my consciousness and lightly floated away.

I looked about, surprised. The air was full of sunshine. People were walking briskly about. Life was still beautiful.

I had been letting a matter that was no rightful concern of mine darken my day.

In my relief I caught myself smiling. I felt as we all feel on waking from a bad dream.

**MANY** of our troubles are only bad dreams.

Many of our troubles are not our troubles at all. They are other people's troubles. And to the other people what we call troubles may not be troubles.

Many of our troubles are merely creations of imagination, due to our failure to see that each of us must bear his responsibilities, must work out his own life.

If we would only stop interfering with one another in matters that were no concern of ours we should find that most of the petty irritations of daily living would disappear. We should get along together more easily, more pleasantly. And we should have more physical and nervous and moral energy to meet our own responsibilities.

WE ALL interfere, even those of us who dislike being interfered with and oppose the practice.

Interference is one of our many ways of preying on one another. And it is one of the hardest of all habits to check in oneself.

The reason is that, as a rule, interference, besides being closely related to exaggerated self-confidence, is the expression of a good impulse.

It takes some thought for most of us to see that unless we exercise care, interference may easily become a nuisance and a tyranny.

Often when people get into trouble as a result of interfering in matters that don't concern them they say something like: "But I did that out of pure kindness."

They don't stop to think that, as a motive, pure kindness is not enough. It ought to be reasonable kindness.

Where kindness is reasonable it seldom leads to interference.

For it is of the essence of kindness to give to others as much freedom of will as we like to have for ourselves.

IN THIS matter one sex is more often at fault than the other. It is the more sympathetic in the smaller affairs of life, sometimes in the larger affairs, too. The considera-

## INTERFERING

tion may lead to repeated interference in the smaller affairs, where interference is most trying.

This kind of interference makes little things difficult. It sometimes makes daily living consist of a series of entanglements, of discussions, of arguments, about matters that are not worth noticing.

To escape such entanglements there are many who resort to all kinds of concealments, subterfuges and deceit.

I HAVE lately seen a play, written by a woman, that offers a curious example of interference from the feminine point of view. The hero, a distinguished physician, after a sleepless night, appears in the early morning feeling worn out. A man friend asks him if he doesn't want breakfast. He replies that he doesn't feel like eating breakfast. The friend insists. The physician shows annoyance. Then the friend arranges a little table, orders breakfast and the physician finally eats.

The scene is presented as humorous. The interfering friend is held up as generous, as doing a sympathetic and likable action.

He is, of course, a bore. If he had really been the kind of man the author had wished him to seem to be, he would have let the physician alone.

Moreover, the whole scene was unmasculine. It could not have occurred between men.

But it could have occurred between some women.

This kind of thing kind women do to one another all the time. They do it also to men, except where men resist it and resent it. Even then they sometimes do it, very kind and very unwise women.

For very kind women find the habit of interfering almost impossible to give up.

They cannot see that kindness may be a form of self-indulgence.

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THERE are people, however, that like to be interfered with. They are usually to be found among those who expect and demand attention. Without it they feel that they are neglected. They illustrate one of the most unpleasant kinds of egotism and selfishness. The more they are interfered with the more their selfishness is encouraged. Often they succeed in making the interferers, the natural tyrants, their slaves.

They let the interferers do much of their thinking and their work for them. And, as a rule, the more they let the interferers do for them the more they exact.

They tyrannize over their tyrants.

CHILDREN are the greatest of all sufferers from interference. Sometimes they resent it bitterly. Sometimes it cripples them for life. For interference tends to damage initiative. It may completely destroy initiative in the young. It resists the law of nature that encourages the young to do things voluntarily, spontaneously, by imitation.

Just as in adults, however, so in children interference may lead to their establishing a tyranny over the tyrants.

There are no greater tyrants in the world than children spoiled by interference, by affectionate relatives who are continually trying to thwart them and to do things for them.

I once happened to be present when a little girl, three of four years old, was dressing. It was interesting to see her reach out for the garments held by her mother. She plainly wished to dress herself. She was giving expression to a strong initiative, a valuable quality. But her mother wished to have the pleasure of dressing her child. Instead of giving up each garment, she would carefully adjust it in place. Incidentally she was interfering with the child's initiative, making it weaker in the direction of self-help.

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I saw that girl grow up. In everything she did she showed her natural initiative. And this initiative was continually thwarted through the love of the mother. It was too strong to be destroyed. It simply took a new turn. Instead of leading to self-control and energy, it led to selfishness and the control of the mother.

That child is a woman now, with children of her own. Her mother lives with her and takes care of the children. She herself spends most of her time in changing her clothes, going to the theater and playing bridge.

I SOMETIMES hear a man say, in presence of his very kind wife, "Oh, my dear, I want to do that wrong. Let me do it wrong."

I have noticed that the moment he uses those words his wife stops interfering. Then, in his own way, he does some trifling act, like pulling down the window-shade or stirring the grate fire.

His humorous habit of defending himself from petty interference at home has made his wife conscious of the little fault in her character. The humor in it, emphasized by repetition, operates as a check and keeps her from feeling hurt.

THERE is a very important principle in the saying of that husband. It ought to be kept in mind by every one of us.

We all like to do little things in ways that other people may consider wrong. And though those ways might be wrong for other people, they may be right for us. At any rate, they are our ways, for us the easiest and best, because spontaneous. They are likely to express deep-seated qualities.

And for us the right ways of other people may be wrong, the hardest and the least desirable because imposed from the outside. They may be in conflict with our natural tendencies and impulses.

### **INTERFERING**

Moreover, wrong ways may be valuable. They may lead to salutary mistakes. They may open up rich sources of wisdom.

The best lessons of life are the lessons of our own blunders.

The interferers of the world often interfere with the best lessons of life.

## THINKING

**W**E ARE learning to think about right thinking. Never before in the history of the world has thinking been so much thought about and talked about. There are those who go so far as to say that it is the most important of all subjects. Their reason is that it reaches to the roots of our being, not only to the cause of our actions, but to the vital principles of the soul.

One might fancy from our talk about thinking that its importance had only lately been discovered. Here we yield to the pleasant illusion that makes us deny the saying, "There's nothing new under the sun."

As soon as civilization began there must have been those who realized the importance of thinking. The mediæval philosophers were fascinated by the technicalities of thinking. Surely writers like Marcus Aurelius and Shakespeare understood as clearly as we do. All religions have taught the wisdom of wholesome thinking, its necessity for right living and for salvation.

We like to speak of "new thought" as if it had been discovered the day before yesterday, just as we like to speak of other factors in our civilization as if they had never existed before.

And yet we know that human life runs in circles. In the past we are constantly finding proofs that we are merely repeating the experiences of other ages.

"THERE is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

Here is the whole story, beautifully expressed by Shakespeare. From this clew one might work out the whole philosophy of thinking.



## THINKING

If vileness does not exist outside ourselves, if it exists only in our thinking, then our thinking must have the power of creation.

If we think of all things as vile, they become, to us, really vile.

The vile things become established in our minds.

There they create vileness.

If we think of people as vile, the people become, in our minds, really vile. They, too, create in our minds what we call vileness, which is, as a matter of fact, only our own vileness.

And if we think of life as vile it becomes vile. Wherever we turn, wherever we look, we find ourselves enveloped in vileness.

Such an attitude toward life would, of course, become intolerable. It would lead to a poisoning of the whole nature. To most of us the consequences are prohibitive. We cannot endure going to such an extreme.

Those who do go to such an extreme become ill.

Sometimes they isolate themselves. Sometimes they have to be put away. Sometimes they perish.

But there are many of us who go part of the way. We have evil thoughts. And the evil we attribute to things and to people outside becomes part of us. Often it causes us great suffering. Always it creates in us bitterness of spirit.

Sometimes the thoughts are tucked away in our consciousness and mercifully segregated by nature, just as physical poisons are often segregated so that the whole system may not be infected. Occasionally, the hideous thoughts will escape from their prisons and torment us. The oftener they escape the easier it becomes for them to escape. They may even refuse to go back to their cells. Like swarming foes they take possession of the citadel of the mind, creating disorder and misery.

## THINKING

WHAT are we to do if our thoughts of evil master us?  
How are we to escape?

Can we possibly get away from the things that have become a part of ourselves, that have, in a sense, actually become ourselves?

For to every one of us it is plain that the philosophers are right in saying, "As we think, we are." From daily experience every one of us verifies the truth of that saying.

Moreover, as we are, we think.

There is continual action between our thinking and our being.

"Oh, if I could only get away from my thoughts!" one sometimes hears people exclaim.

It is just as if they were to say, "Oh, if I could only get away from my head!"

They really mean, whether they are aware or not aware, "Oh, if I could only get away from myself!"

CAN WE get away from ourselves?

The philosophers say that we can. And they say that escape is easy. It is achieved simply by thinking.

But already our sickness results from thinking. Our sickness actually is thinking. How can more thinking help us? What we long for is not more thinking, but less thinking, no thinking at all.

The philosophers, however, say that unwholesome thinking can be made into wholesome thinking simply by our realizing the nature of thinking.

All we have to do is to take a new point of view.

YOU must often have noticed how different things may seem when viewed from different angles. From one angle a thing may seem ugly, and from another angle it may seem beautiful.

And yet we say that the ugliness and the beauty lie in the things themselves.

## THINKING

They really lie in us, in our way of looking.

We see, for instance, two people in exactly the same circumstances subject to the same influences. One will be serene, perhaps happy; the other will be discontented, perhaps miserable. Each may think that the explanation lies in things outside. But we know that such cannot be the case. For the same things could not result so differently.

The real explanation lies, of course, in the minds of the two, in the thoughts, in the point of view.

THERE are those who go so far as to say there are no such things in the world as things. What we call material is, according to their theory, only the creation of consciousness.

Suppose they are right. Then the importance of keeping our minds wholesome becomes paramount. There is no getting away from it.

But even if the theory is unsound does it not really find a certain justification in practice?

BUT THERE are those who consider this theory intolerable, the intensely practical people. They know perfectly well that some things are bad and some things are good, and that there are good people and bad people. Their realization of goodness and badness they express with feeling. The thought of goodness infuses in them good feeling. The thought of badness infuses in them bad feeling. So even they must admit that they are influenced by what they think, and they must know that if they could only have good thoughts all the time, or rather, thoughts of goodness, they would feel very much better.

Here they may be inclined to develop more ill feeling, the ill feeling that accompanies censure and resentment.

"We are not in any way to blame if there is badness in the world," they may say.

Is it true that they are not in any way to blame?

### THINKING

**THERE** is no doubt that resentment and censure with all the accompanying ill feeling work fearful damage in the world. They surely create more resentment and more censure. They are among the most disturbing factors in life. They maintain the undercurrent of turmoil.

Incidentally, they doubtless do some good. They check many things that we regard as evil.

But is it not possible that by another method, the method of encouraging goodness by having good thoughts, all the wholesome consequences might be achieved, together with a great many more consequences now lost, making for the deepening of goodness and for the spread of goodness?

## THRIFTLESSNESS

**WE** OFTEN hear that the poor are thriftless. In the charge there is much truth. If the poor were thrifty they would not be poor. In fact, all they have to do in order to escape from their poverty is to become thrifty. Each day of their lives this lesson is brought home to them. And yet they do not profit. In many cases, instead of becoming less poor, they grow poorer.

No wonder that many of us are tempted to say: "It is all their own fault." The logic is plain.

As a class, there are no people so extravagant as the poor. In this regard they outdo even many of the rich. For, as a rule, the rich are thrifty. No matter how much they may spend, at the end of the year they manage to have more money than they had the year before. They know that money breeds money, just as the poor know that poverty breeds poverty.

And yet, the poor will persist in being poor, in continuing the extravagances that keep them from becoming thrifty and that tend to deprive them of the very necessities of life.

CONSIDER, for example, the amounts that the poor pay for rent alone. In the first place, they cannot afford to pay rent at all. The money they give to landlords in a few years would be enough to buy large tracts of land and to pay for the building of houses, where they could live in comfort. Nevertheless, they go on paying rent, and ridiculously high rent, too. For a few wretched rooms, often dirty and ill-smelling, they will pay far more than the legal rate of interest would be on the value of

the property. It is notorious that tenements occupied by the poor are among the most profitable real estate investments in the world. And yet, as we all know, the landlords are often cheated by the tenants. For, among the poor, there are many who either will not or cannot pay their bills. Nevertheless, the landlords make up for the loss. How do they do it? The way is perfectly simple. They take advantage of the thriftlessness of the poor. Those that do pay their rents make up for the loss by paying more than their share.

WE ARE told how careful the thrifty people are in their purchasing. The poor, being thriftless, are the most reckless purchasers. Think of the way they buy coal. By the basket! If they thought about the matter at all they would know that buying coal by the basket is fearfully extravagant. The only way to buy coal is in large quantities. Suppose the railroads of the country bought their coal by the basket. Any railroad that tried the experiment would soon go out of business. It would be gobbled up by one of the other railroads.

THE POOR show a similar extravagance in buying food. Often they pay money for food that is hardly fit to eat. Many judicious people, rather than eat such food, would prefer to go hungry. They would feel that in hunger there was less danger. And, in the buying of liquid food, including milk, so necessary to children, the poor are worse than extravagant. They are almost depraved. They give money to thrifty milk dealers for milk that is so unwholesome as at times to be a deadly poison. In other words, from their scanty resources, they pay for the privilege of killing their children. Here it would seem as if the law might interfere, particularly as it is known to have a special fondness for arresting the poor. But we never hear of a mother being arrested for prac-

## THRIFTLESSNESS

ting such inhumanity on her child. In this matter the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has been exceedingly careless.

THE THRIFTLESSNESS of the poor leads to all kinds of absurd notions that tend to make the poor poorer. There is the matter of taxation. The poor think that they pay no taxes. Often, as a result, they are made to feel ashamed. In some States men who are too poor to pay a poll tax are not allowed to vote. And yet, even they are paying taxes all the time, indirectly, in rent and in the cost of necessities.

OCCASIONALLY the poor are reminded of what they owe to the tax payers. For example, in New York City, there are public baths in the poor districts, rather handsome structures, with inscriptions, bearing legends of this kind: "Dedicated by the City of New York to the People of New York." These public baths the poor regard as a gift. They are expected to feel grateful to the city. Often they are grateful. It does not occur to them that they are themselves part of the city, that they help to create the city, and that often they pay for those bath houses with blood, their own and their children's.

ON THE backs of the poor there is a fearful burden. It is bearing them down. It is wearing out their strength. No wonder that so many of them, as they walk along the street at the end of the day, look so tired and depressed, instead of standing erect, chest out, lungs deeply breathing, cheeks and eyes glowing with health, showing that they know how to enjoy life. The reason is that they are thriftless. They do not realize how many precious things, including air and light and sunshine, are their rightful inheritance.

## ASKING

ONE DAY I sat in a fashionable church beside an old gentleman. There was beautiful music, brilliant preaching, fervent praying. At the close of the service the old gentleman turned to me and said: "Whenever I come into a church I imagine that I can see a great pile, like a pile of stones, heaped up in front of the place where the clergyman conducts the services. It is made by the insincere prayers sent toward the throne of God. They rise for a few feet and then, of their own weight, they fall to the ground."

Since that time the words have often occurred to me, both in churches and outside.

I wonder if in every church in the world there can be a pile of such petrified prayers.

I RECENTLY went to hear a distinguished citizen make a public address. Ten thousand people had assembled to sit at his feet. Shortly after he appeared and the applause had subsided, a clergyman stepped forward and delivered what seemed to me to be a remarkable prayer. It was remarkable because, according to my way of thinking, it was not a prayer at all. It was a speech, apparently directed to the Divine Presence, but really addressed to that audience. It took up a great deal of time and it made the audience impatient and restless. For we had come to hear the distinguished citizen, not to give another man a chance to exploit himself.

Then I asked myself if that kind of thing happened often and I looked back for similar occasions. From my own experience I could recall several instances where prayer had been a means of self-exploitation.



## ASKING

I wonder if all such prayers do not make a large contribution to those piles of stones in the churches of the world, and if they have not done a good deal to weaken the influence of prayer in the minds of men.

Prayer is such a delicate thing, so personal, so intimate, so sacred, that the faintest breath of insincerity must defile it and change its nature.

WHAT can the Divine Being think of such prayers? Surely, in His infinite wisdom and patience, He cannot think nearly so harshly of them as we, standing apart and criticising them, are tempted to think.

To Him they may be merely expressions of human weakness. And from their weakness there may rise a powerful appeal.

So, perhaps, my old gentleman was mistaken in thinking that insincere prayers fell wholly to earth of their own weight.

Perhaps, what falls, if anything falls, is only the pretension in such prayers, the self-assertion.

I know a man who boasts that he has no faith in a divine power, no faith in another life, no faith in anything that cannot in some way be related to physical nature. I sometimes call him "the last of the atheists."

A few years ago disaster fell upon him, crushing, overwhelming. But he was not overwhelmed or crushed. He stood up, as we say, like a man. After experiences that would have broken many a strong spirit, he emerged into something like peace again. "During all that time," he said to me, "I did not once think of calling on a God for help."

You see, he had kept his pride.

And though the strength of his pride could keep him from breaking, it could not keep him from boasting.

## ASKING

IN MY own lifetime the attitude toward atheism and toward religion on the part of thoughtful people has amazingly changed. I can recall heated arguments that I used to hear between the atheists and their opponents, resulting in bitter feeling on both sides. Such arguments may go on now; but I never hear them. I believe that they have become uncommon. Most people who have no religious belief are content with saying, "I don't know." They have no desire to ridicule belief, or to take it away from others. Sometimes they frankly say that they envy such a possession. They are likely to base their envy on the help that comes from the consciousness of a friendly power outside one, a power that can and will sustain, whenever it is appealed to, whenever, indeed, there is even an unconscious appeal, that is, whenever the mind is in sympathy.

IN THE beautiful play, "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett expresses, in its simplest form, the popular attitude in regard to prayer. "It's asking," the little heroine repeatedly declares.

Here we find an echo of the New Testament: "Ask and ye shall receive."

So amazing has been the success in many cases of "asking," that the more profane philosophers have lately been inquiring into the matter. They have discovered that asking has a profound psychological import. They have shown that, simply by "asking," without being allied to any creed, without making any pretension of faith, one can achieve extraordinary results. There is not needed the slightest trace of belief in the Divine Power, though such belief is a great help, possibly through its strengthening of confidence. The mental healers, for example, frankly say that they can do much more with people of strong religious faith than with people of no faith at all. And yet with people of no faith at all they reach marvel-

#### ASKING

ous results. They persuade their patients to ask, and they ask with their patients, and the asking creates a state of mind that is healing and inspiring.

All that one needs is sufficient confidence to ask.

Where we keep the pores of the body open we may still keep the pores of the mind closed. So the mind, becoming diseased, infects the body.

But once let the mind open itself out to spiritual thoughts and aspirations and it will take on new health, which may extend even into the physical nature.

## DOING THINGS HARD

**T**HERE is a man of my acquaintance who used to pride himself on being industrious. He was always boasting about the amount of work he had to do. He took pleasure in declining engagements that might interfere. Work would pile up around him like a mountain. A few years ago he had a rather serious nervous breakdown. It gave him a good deal of comfort. It enabled him to explain at great length that he was suffering from overwork. Of course the doctor made him take a vacation. When he went back to his office he fell into the old way. A few months later he broke down again. This time he was really scared. He consulted a distinguished nerve specialist. When he explained what a hard worker he was the nerve specialist said: "The trouble with you doesn't come from your work. There are plenty of men who do as much work as you do and more and manage to keep well. Hard work, in itself, never hurts any one. What does hurt is taking your work hard."

THIS experience was rather humiliating for this worker. But he had sense enough to profit. He became humble. "What do you think I'd better do?" he said.

The doctor replied: "First, I'd rest for a while. Then I'd devote some time to developing interests outside work. You have taken your work so hard, you've probably destroyed whatever outside interests you used to have. After I'd succeeded in developing outside interests I would go back to my office and try to learn how to work. I would find out the easy way of working. The easy way, you know, is always the best way. The hard way is

## DOING THINGS HARD

always the worst way. And, remember, the way of doing a thing doesn't lie in the work. It lies in you."

THAT man now likes to tell the story on himself. He has stopped boasting of being a hard worker. He has acquired a few human interests. He has learned to make his work easy. He is just as successful as he ever was, perhaps more successful, and he has plenty of leisure. Incidentally, he has become a much finer human being, broader, more social and more likable. For in taking his work hard, besides growing narrow, he fostered in himself the habit of taking everything hard. He even took life hard. And, worst of all, he made life hard for those about him.

I ONCE heard of an old farmer, a wise and kindly man, preach on the subject of working. In the community, among the mountains of New Hampshire, where I was passing a summer, he used to speak in the village hall on Sunday mornings. In illustrating the way to meet work, he drew his examples from every-day experience. "You know," he said, "how easy it is when you are haying to toss a pitchfork of hay into the car. The work requires very little strength. It is pleasant, if you go along quietly and steadily. But let your work once get away from you and, from being in control of it, you will be controlled by it and you will lose control of yourself. Once let the hay pile up in a great mound and you will be appalled. The task of moving it will seem hard. And yet all it really amounts to is a single toss of the pitchfork."

IT SEEMED to me that in those words that old farmer had reached a commonplace and yet significant truth. The hardest things in life, broken into their elements, become the easiest things. By dealing with them, bit by bit, they present opportunities for delightful exercise.

## DOING THINGS HARD

It is only when we look at them in the mass and allow them to overawe us that they seem hard and make us take them hard.

I KNOW a man who used to be acquainted with Gladstone. He happened to live near Hawarden, where Gladstone found diversion in chopping down trees. Occasionally he would call there. He said that Gladstone always seemed to have plenty of time to receive visitors, never betraying the slightest impatience at intrusion. I asked him if he could explain the secret. "It was very simple," he said. "Gladstone took every experience easily. In the first place, he was interested in everything he did and in every one he met. No matter where he was, he was always getting something out of life. So he had a quiet spirit and he could go from one interest to another without disturbance or flurry." Here perhaps lay the secret of so much accomplishment in one life, as well as the secret of its length in years. Gladstone was successful and happy because he never took life hard.

THE HABIT of regarding things as hard and of taking them hard explains much of the sickness and failure about us. As a matter of fact, when a thing is done in the right way it is never hard. Of course, there are tasks that some people undertake without having the proper qualifications. The fault here lies in their lack of judgment. Those who perform the most efficient service in life are not likely to be called "hard workers." Watch them and you will find that they do their work easily and contentedly. Nearly always they have a sound mind in a sound body, showing that they know not merely how to adapt themselves to work, but how to adapt themselves to all the other expressions of every-day living.

ONCE when Charles W. Eliot, formerly president of Harvard University, was asked if he were traveling abroad

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for the purpose of taking a rest, he replied with a smile: "No, I get all the rest I need when I sleep." And yet, in his long career, he has done an immense amount of work. He has kept well because he has known how to work, because he has never taken work hard.

## IMITATING

**R**ICHARD MANSFIELD, the actor, used to be sensitive about the unkind things occasionally said of the stage and of actors. He regarded the ability to act as one of the deepest of all human instincts. He declared that it ran through nearly every expression in life, that most human beings acted nearly all the time. In a sense, Mansfield was right. Acting results from the instinct to imitate. And the instinct to imitate is deep-seated and one of the first of the instincts to reveal itself. By its nature gives us our earliest lessons in living. So quick are children to imitate that educators regard the early years as of chief importance in the forming of character.

It is often amusing to see the imitative instinct at work in children. On the stage and in every-day life children are born actors. Among them the imitative instinct finds plastic material to work on and to mold. As children grow older certain habits of imitation become fixed. These may last through life, working their influence for good or for ill.

YEARS ago, when I first went to Paris, I used to be astonished to hear the little French children that I saw playing under the trees in the Champs Elysees chattering away in French. Though they had been at work on the language not nearly as many years as I had been at work, they had already acquired a kind of perfection I could not hope to attain. They had simply taken in the language through their ears and made it their own by means of the imitative instinct, which, in me, so far as the acquiring of a new language was concerned, had become enfeebled.

My own astonishment and my envy of those little ones



## IMITATING

I was delighted to hear echoed by a French lady I met in Paris at that time. She had just come back from a visit to London and I asked her what had impressed her most during her stay. Quick as a flash she replied: "Hearing the children speak English in the parks. It was wonderful."

I USED to have a similar sensation myself in hearing English children speaking. Their clear enunciation, their use of words and phrases seldom spoken by children in this country, their pretty voices, made me realize the carelessness of our own way of speaking.

Those children had not been taught to speak well. By the instinct to imitate they had merely reproduced the pronunciation and the tones of those about them.

ONCE in Venice I was approached by an Italian guide offering his services. He spoke English very fluently and I went along with him. As he proceeded with his explanations I was amazed to discover that he used what to my ear was the most absurd cockney dialect, flavored with an Italian accent. I asked him where he had learned English. He replied: "On board ship. For five years I was a sailor on an English steamer running between Liverpool and Genoa."

He seemed to be unaware that there was anything peculiar in his language, though, in his long experience as guide, he had evidently met a great many English-speaking travelers.

By means of the imitating instinct, nature had enabled him to learn a language in a peculiar dialect, and once fixed in his mind it remained fixed.

IN ALL those cases we see the influence of environment at work. The marvel is that, in training children, we don't give it more consideration.

## IMITATING

We often speak of environment as if it were a material thing, largely a matter of neighborhood. But it is mental and it is spiritual.

In the most subtle ways we all contribute to it, not merely by our speech, but by our attitude toward one another as well, even by our thinking.

When children live in a narrow environment, accompanied by cramping influences, they are almost certain to become narrow. When they see about them expressions of ill will, of envy, of jealousy and of resentment, they learn both to express and to feel all those qualities. In other words, they act up to those qualities.

Parents often wonder why their children are, as they say, "so bad." They seldom stop to think of the influence of the example set by themselves.

ON THE other hand, the instinct to imitate eagerly responds to wholesome influences. I know a woman who, after a long life spent in education work, frankly declares that she believes education is a failure. Her reason is that it cannot compete with the instinct to imitate, developed by the every-day influences in the home. She expresses pessimistic and heterodox ideas in regard to that sacred institution. In its very sacredness she finds the greatest of all obstacles to reform. She says that we speak of home as if it were the abiding-place of all the virtues, whereas it is, as at present established, a place where many of the evils of our society originate and develop. "Reform the home," she says, "and most other reforms will take care of themselves."

WHAT is it that this woman educator finds in most home life that is so harmful? I once asked her and she replied with perfect frankness: "The home is the place where self-assertion finds its freest expression. Nearly every home contains at least one tyrant. And

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the influence of one tyrant expresses itself in all kinds of petty, but far-reaching evils. In many homes every member of the family is self-assertive. So we find there the most shocking disorder. There are comparatively few homes in the world where there is self-control, consideration for others, encouragement of those qualities that make for peace and happiness."

SEVERAL years ago I spent a few days in a very attractive city in the Middle West. I met there many ladies of charming appearance, of exceptional taste in dress, and of delightful social graces. But among them I noticed one characteristic that struck me as curious and contradictory. It showed itself in the way they held themselves, in the way they talked, both in their loud tones and in their vigorously expressed opinions.

I spoke with some astonishment of this characteristic to a friend who had lived there all her life. I asked her how she could explain it. "It's very simple," she replied. "It's the direct result of the example of a woman who came here from New York several years ago." She then mentioned the name of the woman, the wife of a very rich man. "She became a leader here and toward every one she adopted an arrogant manner that was considered very smart. The result was that many of the other women here imitated it, even those who were at first most bitter in their resentment. It became the thing. And it has gone on ever since. Many people who come here notice it."

THE INSTINCT to imitate is, like most other instincts, highly serviceable. But it has to be kept under control. Before we yield to it we ought to be sure that what we imitate is good. One of the most pitiful things in the world is to see people imitating what is unworthy under the impression that such imitation seems creditable.

## IMITATING

I know a very clever girl who takes pride in showing her cleverness by ridiculing. She even ridicules those about her to their faces. Her victims, through courtesy or through dislike of making a scene, usually suffer in silence. Some of them take great pains to avoid her. Others punish her by speaking ill of her behind her back. Still others enjoy the expressions of her cleverness, both because these are amusing and because they put people at a disadvantage. For it is a pitiful truth that some of us, those, too, who may be most concerned about our own dignity, like to see others made absurd.

This girl has so long indulged herself in the habit of ridicule that it has become fixed. It would be almost impossible for any one to convince her that it is disagreeable and that it does her harm. She is simply acting up to what she believes to be a delightful expression of herself. In other words, she is imitating a wholly false ideal.

It is curious to note how differently we may be affected by one another. With one person we behave in one way, and with another person we behave in another way. Here, perhaps unconsciously, we are imitating the qualities that we think will appeal to the person.

In other words, one person brings out in us a certain set of qualities and another person brings out in us another set of qualities. Often by the display of such qualities we pass judgment on our friends. Those we fall into the gossiping habit with we judge as gossips. Those we try to appear at our best with we honor as superior to our every-day selves. It is the imitating instinct that directs us and often it is a fairly reliable guide, keener than we may suspect, making us do things that, to our sober reason, may seem extraordinary.

It is by imitating that we finally make ourselves over, that we re-create, not merely the mansion of the soul, but the soul itself.

## IMITATING

AND YET, however persistently we may indulge the imitating instinct, however we may act in our every-day life, it is the truth that we inevitably reveal. For what we long to be we essentially are. And here, perhaps, is the most powerful attribute in our struggling human nature. We may go wrong in our choice of qualities to imitate, we may follow false ideals, and where we follow good ideals we may repeatedly fail. Nevertheless, in our striving we tend to express our noblest selves, our truest selves. Even where we go wrong there may be something of good in the animating spirit. Perhaps, through the generations this striving works an influence greater than we calculate. Surely it provides us with our greatest hope for the future of the race.

## THE COMFORTABLE PEOPLE

**T**HEY may be found in the most unexpected places. As a rule we recognize them at once. In a casual meeting they make us feel at ease. Their very presence is soothing. Invariably their faces are placid. Their manners are so good that in their presence we never think of manners. They smile easily, but not too much. Unlike most of us, they carry about no barriers. They don't keep us at a distance. On the other hand, they never try to break through our defenses. They make us feel that they are willing to let us alone. In their company we unconsciously realize that our defenses are not necessary and we let ourselves emerge. Through the sense of comfort that we feel, perhaps we become comfortable people, too, for a time, at any rate.

THE OTHER day I was walking along the street with a lady I knew very well. She happened to meet an acquaintance of her own sex. With some hesitancy, as if they both scented danger, they stopped to exchange greetings. The manner of each was formal. It was plain that they were both ill at ease. After a few awkward minutes the meeting ended and we passed on.

For a long time the lady and I walked in silence. Then, with a smile, she said: "If the angels in heaven really pay any attention to us, they must laugh at some of our meetings."

I was amused by this frank recognition of the character of that scene.

"Why do you suppose we have so many awkward meetings?" I asked.

We walked a long distance before the reply came: "Isn't it because we think so much about ourselves and

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about what people are thinking of us? We don't dare to be unconscious. We get tangled up in our self-consciousness."

Then I thought of the comfortable people. They were never tangled up in self-consciousness. They never seemed to think about themselves.

I ONCE attended a little evening party where the guests included several clever people. The atmosphere was painful. The clever people were working hard, trying, it was plain, to appear at their best. Some of their remarks were extremely witty. Occasionally something would show real depth. But the brilliancy could not relieve the nervous tension. In the intervals between the sallies we were all ill at ease.

Presently there entered a woman well known for her talent. Most of the people she knew rather well. She greeted every one. Presently she sat down and began to talk, not brilliantly, but spontaneously, delightfully, infusing into that group the spirit of freedom.

At once the cleverness subsided. There was general relaxation and relief.

Then I saw this woman was one of the comfortable people.

IT IS WONDERFUL what the comfortable people can do. Their presence alone is a deep, quiet force, all the more effective through working unobtrusively, mysteriously. As a rule they are not what the world calls interesting. But, as in the case of that literary woman, they may be endowed with intellectual power. It really makes very little difference whether they are gifted or commonplace, whether they are complex or simple.

Wherever they go they bring peace, repose, health. Haven't you seen the comfortable people, without a word, by their mere presence, cause discord and argument to

## THE COMFORTABLE PEOPLE

subside? They put mere opinions to shame. The explanation is, I think, that they shame the self-assertion that hides itself behind opinions. Before their unconsciousness, self-consciousness realizes its ugliness. It can't endure the association.

SOMETIMES the comfortable people have a philosophy. They have achieved their wisdom through experience and through thinking. They give us all reason to hope. Perhaps by the same process we can succeed in becoming like them.

On the other hand, most of the comfortable people possess an inherited genius. It may, of course, have been developed by practice in other generations. Perhaps they are the flowers of the race, the highest expression of human beauty. Of what consequence is it that the world has never celebrated them and held them up as heroes? It is enough for them to be just what they are. And yet there is real loss here, for if there were distinction to be gained by the comfortable people we should all try to achieve it. Much of the effort that we now devote to jumping up and down, to making noise, to drawing attention to our futilities, might be devoted to real profit, to those silent tasks worked out in the depths of consciousness.

OF COURSE, I know that in this opinion most people disagree, many of the thoughtful, too. They consider that the world is to be saved by strife, by turmoil, by fighting, by the exploitations of all the hideous qualities they glorify with the name of effort. Perhaps they are right. But they ought not to be sure. They know so little about the other method. And yet, in their hearts, they love the comfortable people. If you will watch the most valiant of the fighters, the noisiest, the most self-assertive, the most preposterous, you will find that every now and then they turn to the comfortable people for solace and for



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rest. But for the comfortable people they might perish of fatigue. They might not be able to endure the burden of living with themselves.

As a rule the comfortable people have a delightful humor. In every-day life they find a surprising number of things to laugh at. Not that they ridicule. Toward others they never take the superior attitude. On the contrary, their humor carries no sting. It is perfectly innocent. It creates no uneasiness. In it any one can join. Often the comfortable people laugh at themselves. They show that they feel their own relation to the absurdities of life and the incongruities of humanity. They are true philosophers.

The comfortable people know just how far to go. They never overdo. Instinctively they avoid doing the things that at the moment seem attractive and later carry penalties. In their relation to the present they never fail, consciously or unconsciously, to keep an eye on the future. They seem to be gifted with a genius for realizing implications, for feeling subtle intimations. The thoughts and the acts that carry seeds of evil they avoid. Whatever seeds they sow themselves almost invariably spring up in good deeds. Whenever life goes wrong with them, instead of reacting unwisely and making the situation worse, as so many of us do, they lie low. It is as if a storm passed over their heads, leaving them unharmed. They teach us the folly of ill-natured resistance. They have discovered the meaning of the words that to so many of us are unintelligible: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

In the great figures of history there are few that can be included among the comfortable people. Even the philosophers betray a quality that bars them out, a kind of self-concern and remoteness. Indeed, most of the great

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ones of the earth convey the sense of discomfort. In the achievement and the maintenance of success there is isolation. History echoes with the penalties that come out of it, the exactions, the apprehension, the uneasiness. These echoes suggest that the great have paid a fearful price. Often they long for the wide companionship of the comfortable people. We all know how many of the kings of old, in their weariness of themselves and of their state, would occasionally assume a disguise and mingle freely in the every-day world. They were imitating the comfortable people.

Even among our own leaders, since the establishment of what we like to call democracy, though we might expect to find many of the comfortable people, there is a surprising lack. Lincoln is the conspicuous exception. From among the comfortable people no distinction could shake him, no responsibilities or trials.

IN LITERATURE we might expect to find many of the comfortable people. Surely they ought to be largely represented in the great providers of diversion from care, the wise observers, the wholesome entertainers. But can you think of many? Do you often read a story with the feeling that you would like to know the human being behind it? At this moment George Eliot comes to my mind. Of all imaginative writers she seems to me the most lovable. I cannot open a book of hers at random without feeling that a fine understanding is expressing itself, a large and generous sympathy. Nearly every one of us cherishes some writer that offers a refuge from the turmoil of experience, that gives us the restful sense provided by the comfortable people.

THE REWARDS of the comfortable people are so great the marvel is that we don't all compete. And yet, in this company, the idea of competition is absurd. The comfort-

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able people owe nothing to striving. Those who succeed in making themselves comfortable people begin in the simplest of all ways, by caring. Once care more for other people than for oneself and the problem is solved. Instantly there is relief from the burden of our assertions and pretenses. The world changes. It grows more beautiful. It reveals wonders before hidden. It pours out unsuspected treasures. Those creatures that once went about, uninteresting, perhaps offensive, become delightful presences. Now, perhaps, we can see what the idealistic cults mean when they say that there is no such thing as a material world, that there is only spirit. It is we, ourselves, who make the base clay. Just as easy and with joy, instead of pain and sorrow, we can work the magic of enchantment.

I SOMETIMES wish that we could look into the minds of the comfortable people. They would give us valuable lessons. I wonder if we should not find them more or less alike. The differences in thinking would be of little account. Essentially the mind of the highest and the lowest in the estimation of the world would be the same. We should see that all the minds were nourished from the same spring, forever bubbling, fresh and pure, carrying through the whole nature health and poise. Perhaps where the world has gone wrong is in its disregard of this spring. At times it denies that such a spring exists. But we all know better. We feel it when we are among the comfortable people. Somehow, for the time, they purify the spring within us. Perhaps quite unintentionally on their part they make us realize that our own spring is impure. They make us see that if we all drew from the living waters of tolerance and generosity and sympathy how different life would be, how quickly our problems would settle themselves!

## BEING IN A HURRY

**T**HERE is a business man of my acquaintance who is always in a hurry. I suspect that he is proud of the habit. At any rate he frankly displays it just as we all display qualities we are proud of.

In the morning he runs down the street to catch his suburban train for his office. He darts into his office like a flash. He starts bells ringing. About him he creates excitement. He sets all his subordinates hurrying, too.

When his subordinates offer him papers to sign he is in such a hurry to get the papers that he snatches at them. Often he misses.

At night, when he starts to go home, he does not wait for the elevator to come up. He runs down the stairs, five flights, invariably reaching the ground floor after the elevator has arrived.

At this hour there is no reason in the world why he should be in a hurry. For, as a rule, he does not try to catch any particular train. He knows that there are several late afternoon trains that he can take. He sometimes waits for a few minutes after reaching the station.

These minutes he spends in fuming.

At the age of sixty or so he is an irascible old man, with his face deeply lined and his nervous system shattered.

INCIDENTALLY this man has a very unwholesome effect on those about him in his business. He wears them out. As soon as he leaves the office the whole office force feels relieved.

I have been told that the moment he disappears, the subordinates gather and spend the rest of the afternoon in loafing and talking about him.

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Naturally he is unpopular with his subordinates. They take as much advantage of him as they dare.

I SOMETIMES wonder how much this man gains by hurrying. In time he saves at most an hour or so a day. This hour or so he loses by the loss of physical and mental and moral efficiency caused by his hurrying.

So there is really no gain in time. There is only loss.

And besides the damage and loss created on every side by the man's habit of hurrying, there is the injury to the man as a social being.

His nervousness, created and fostered by hurrying, has made it impossible for him to secure the calmness of mind and the poise that help to develop the higher qualities, both of mind and heart.

His irascible manner causes him to seem very dictatorial. To the opinions of others he listens with impatience. Often he can't wait for people to stop talking. He saves time by cutting in with opinions of his own.

You see, his hurrying, which causes him to encroach so heavily on the rights of others, is only an expression of egotism. It has grown to be an indulgence, like a vice. And it preys on him, exactly as a vice would do.

THIS man is, in some ways, an exaggerated type of the typical American. His hurrying thrives because it harmonizes with one of our most popular ideals. By hurrying he believes he is letting people see that he is a busy, therefore an important man.

Here we should bear in mind the remark made by the historian Justinian about the mad Roman Emperor Domitian, that a man may be busy catching flies.

Much of this particular man's hurrying, exactly like a great part of all hurrying, is wholly unimportant.

Many of the things that he does might be left undone or might be far better done quietly and with more time.

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IF WE look carefully into the lives of most hurried people we shall find that they are not really the important and effective people of the world. They are the noisy workers who think far more of themselves than of being really useful.

On the other hand, if we look into the lives of the people who do really important work we shall find that they are seldom or never hurried. They always have plenty of time.

THERE are some people who seem to be just a few minutes behind time. If they could catch up their lives would be serene. But they never do catch up. Breathlessly they go through the day as if they were pursuing a phantom. Often they live under a great nervous tension. At the end of the day they are exhausted. One hears them speak as if they were subjected to great trials, including overwork. But, as a matter of fact, the trouble lies wholly within themselves. If they would only calm down and do quietly and serenely what they have to do life would take on a wholly different aspect for them, becoming, instead of a torment, a source of peace and happiness.

THERE are those who seem to be afraid of being ahead of time. If they make an appointment they can't endure keeping it promptly. They hate to be on hand a minute or two in advance. That minute or two is too precious. They must not be wasteful. Besides, in the interval, what would they do? The thought of idly waiting is distressing. And yet such people are nearly always wasteful of time. They do a good deal of idling. What is more serious, by being late, they keep others waiting and encroach on time not their own. Moreover, when they arrive they are likely to be in a state of nervous excitement which is not at all pleasant.

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TO BE always ahead of time is one of the best possible habits. It avoids irritation in oneself and in others. It tends to create a poise that is very valuable, carrying with it the sense of leisurely doing and of ease. So many things that we do, we ourselves fail to do properly through our flurried approach. If we took plenty of time over them, if we looked at them with a quiet mind, we should find most of the difficulties smoothing themselves away. Instead of being perplexed and troubled, we should know the joy of mastery.

TOLSTOY in one of his letters speaks with particular affection of his aunt, Tatyana. "She taught me," he says, "the beauty of a calm and unhurried life." The words suggest a soothing and inspiring presence. Here and there one sees people of this kind. Wherever they go they reproach the nervous haste of the world. They illustrate the meaning of wise living. They make us see how important it is to keep the sources of our being untroubled and self-controlled.

THE MOMENT we get into a hurry the whole nature is agitated. Instead of being one creature, we become many creatures, imperfectly related, discordant, scattered in our thinking and acting under difficulties. Little things become effort and pain. Where there should be harmony there is discord. No wonder there is disaster in the lives of those who, from day to day and from year to year, live in this kind of turmoil. The resulting sickness, physical and mental, is nature's protest and warning. For this reason we ought to see the absurdity of our regarding much of our sickness as an evil. It really is a blessing. But we cannot take advantage of it unless we realize its meaning. If we merely try to cure the symptoms we do ourselves harm. Instead of profiting, we resist our lessons.

SOME PEOPLE think they are not really accomplishing anything unless they hurry. The more they hurry the more faith they have in their own power. Sometimes they boast of the number of things they have done during the day. They seldom stop to inquire whether those things, before being done, were well considered or whether other things, which they have failed to do, may not have been more important. There are times when it is best not to do anything at all, to keep perfectly still, to relax, to rest, and to think. Many of our lives are like growths on ill-nourished ground, like trees rising out of rocky soil. It would be so much finer if we would only enrich the sources with contemplation, resulting in a deeper understanding and sympathy. Those intervals of idleness that the hurried people so persistently avoid might be used with profit.

THERE is a little country place within an hour's ride of a large city where several men of my acquaintance live. Most of them find traveling back and forth each day a hardship. Some of them complain. But one has told me that he considers those two hours among the best hours of his day. They give him time to think. "In the morning," he says, "when I am going up to town I make my plans. In the evening, on my way home, I look over the day's work. But for those two hours on the train I should do a great many things differently, and, I believe, not so well."

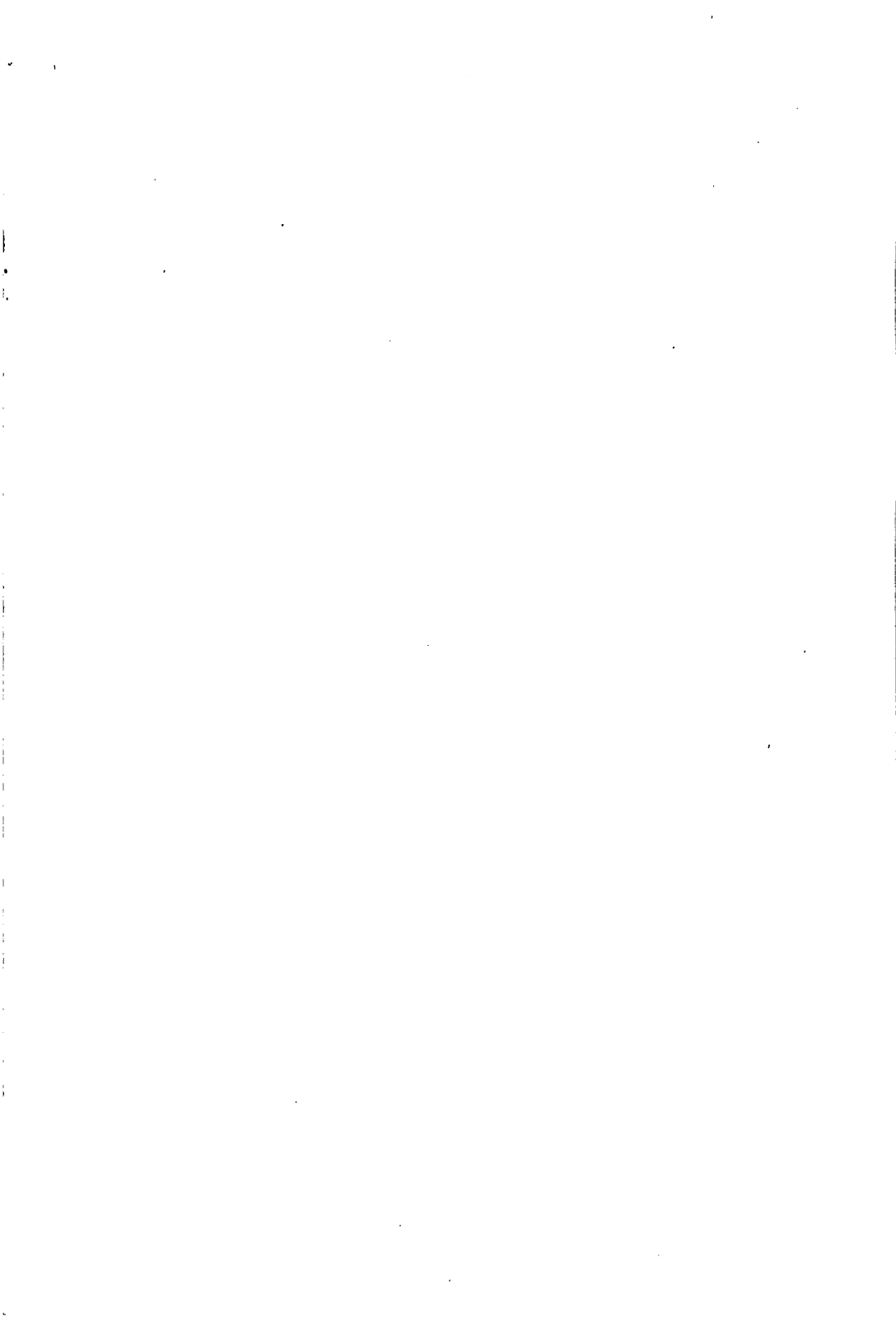
ONE of the arts of life is to be able to sit still and to enjoy. To the hurried people it is almost unknown. The reason is that their hurrying keeps the springs of being troubled. Even in those moments when they are forced to be still they feel hurried. Hurry has become part of their nature. They sometimes reach the state where it seems impossible for them ever to know peace. The best

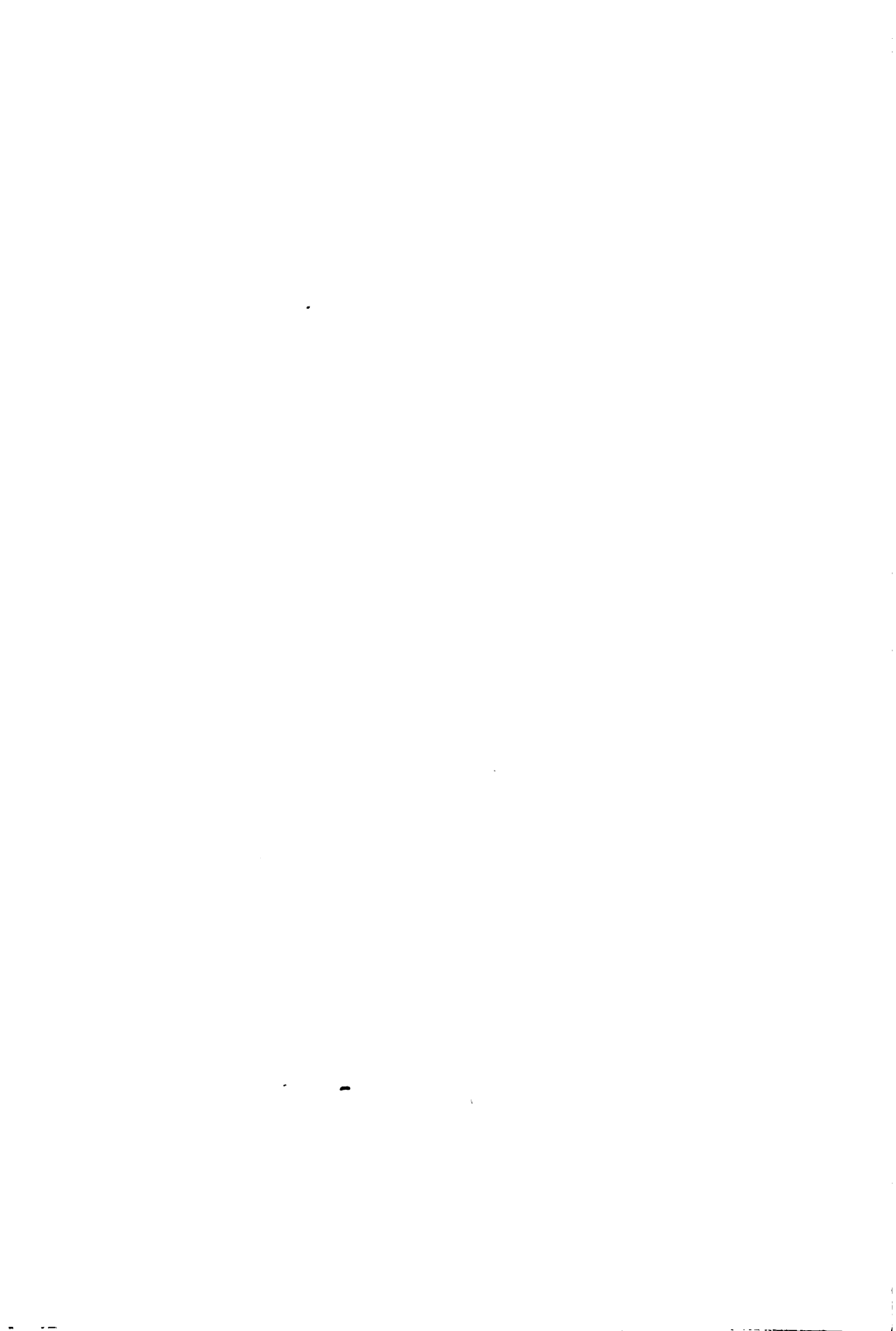


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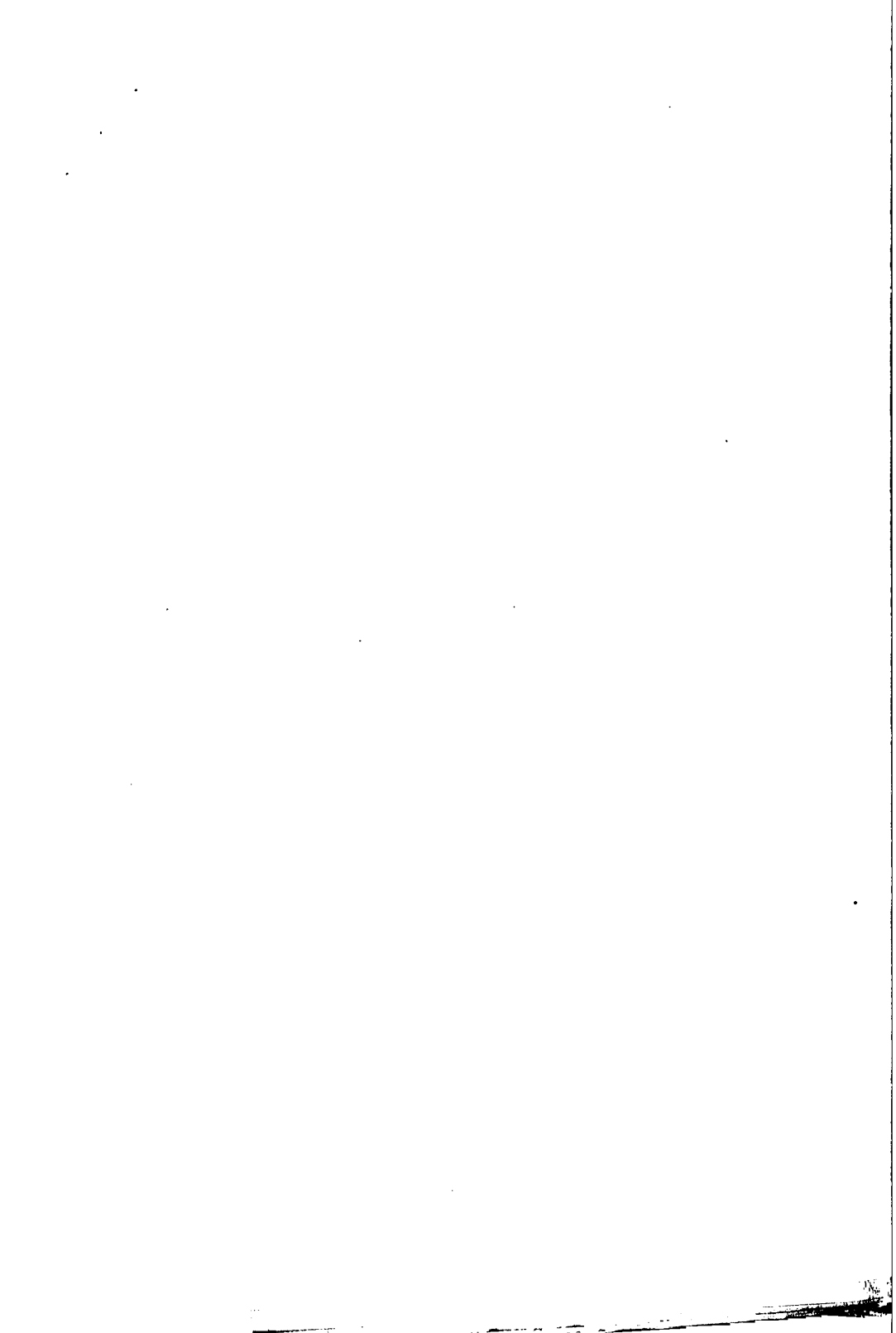
they can achieve is a kind of self-forgetfulness in hurry. The more hurried they are the greater their illusion of freedom. Their hurrying is like drinking or taking a drug.

IF WE CANNOT enjoy stillness, long continued, too, we may be sure that something is wrong. We are out of harmony. On realizing our condition, the best we can do is to stop our activities for a time and to learn to adapt ourselves to quieter living. Till we reach the power to enjoy stillness we cannot live wisely and happily. It is indeed a precious possession. And once attained it will pay us to keep it safe-guarded. One way is by testing ourselves with an interval of repose. If we find it difficult we may be aware that something is threatening. We must let down. When at last we do enjoy the interval we should devote it to at least a few minutes thinking of what we are doing, whether it is good and whether we are doing it in the right way. Soon we shall find our thoughts and our actions making life pleasant. So much that seemed important will betray its unimportance. So much that we might have neglected will present itself and invite us to action. Now the soul is receiving nourishment. It will send new vigor through all our being.











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